# Common People and Levels

**By R. Sweeney**

**Introduction:**

The rulebooks state that normal folk are non-leveled and even soldiers do not possess levels. Giving this some thought, I started hashing out a background for this phenominon where "levels" are not merely a matter of training... but rather some inherent skill, talent, or quirk. In this way, PCs will be of greater level than most NPCs and thus more sought after in dealing with vile threats and other things. (Along the line of *Hercules, The Legendary Journeys*).

It is important to remember that most people across the land are normal, mundane people not possessing Levels, even warriors. Common people are incapable of learning "ways" or character classes. Only one person in a hundred possesses the "touch" that would enable them to progress as a "classed" individual. Only one person in a thousand possesses the inherent Talent to become a cleric, magi, or psi.

Common people, even soldiers in the army, are incapable of possessing levels or advancing in such a way. This does not mean they need be completely defenseless, however, as they can still be taught the ways of a weapon (proficient) and suited up in armor. There are also many thieves, people who can learn the ways of skullduggery without possessing levels. How is this done?

**Demi-Humans:**

First, we must explain the differences between humans and demi-humans with regards to levels. Halflings, by contrast, are treated much like humans.

Elves, Dwarves, and Gnomes are more commonly able to possess levels. This makes the dwarven army greatly feared, even while their numbers may be much smaller than those armies raised by men. However, only one in every 200 possess the ability to pass beyond 5th level. And only one in every 2000 possess the ability to pass beyond 5th level in any magical endeavors.

Their prevalent "touch" of a minor sort comes at a cost. Due to some strange mystical conservation of resources, the prevalence of this minor touch causes much less frequent gifts of extraordinary ability: those individuals capable of near limitless advancing in "levels". [PCs]

**Humans:**

Back to those common people, how do they defend themselves. Humans, of course, train in the militia and gain proficiency with their chosen weapons. These men-at-arms can be armed and armored as appropriate and generally act like 1-1 hd warriors in regards to non-proficient weapon penalties and the like. They have good minds for war, and such trained warriors gain 4 weapon "slots" and 4 non-weapon "slots" to spend as = their superiors will train them. [Yes, the military higher-ups decide, not the soldier]. Each year they spend in the army actively being trained and / or seeing combat duty, the soldier will gain one NWP/WP slot to spend as they are trained by their superiors. Most societies don't war constantly or drill their soldiers endlessly, and a rate of one slot per 5 years is more common. How, then, do we get soldiers of greater fighting skill? Are they these rare, classed individuals? No.

Commoners don't gain levels, nor will most of the army. Army Men-at-arms, however do gain a slot every year that could be used for specialized Non-Weapon Proficiencies such as Blind-fighting or specialization in a weapon. Thus, a warrior regarded as a tough fighter may have developed specialization. An agile hard-to-hit warrior might double specialized in one hander style specialization in the FHB. A halberder might learn two hander style specialization, etc.. There is, however, yet another way these commoners can spend their slots..

Not being hit is a good way to stay alive, thus our soldiers can train in defense.. learning through the school of hard knocks when to duck and when to sway. By spending their NWP slot, they can lower their AC by one. Lowering this Modifier can be done once per year, but the cost escalates. Going from AC Mod -1 to an AC Mod -2 costs 2 slots instead of one.. AC -2 mod to AC -3 Mod costs three. Thus, after several years of training, a soldier might have spent 6 slots and have a non-magical -3 modifier to their AC.

Another way to stay alive, is to kill your enemies first. Thus, like with the AC modifiers, a soldier can spend a point to increase his Thaco. The escalating (cumulative) scale for improvement remains the same as above.

Of note: Elves, Dwarves, and Gnomes (who by nature have a bit of the touch) and classed individuals cannot use WP slots in this way. They increase their Thaco by level, and their skill at defense is augmented according to hps, not AC mods.

Mundane folk could learn to defend themselves better if taught self-defense by a martial arts instructor. (See *Complete Book of Ninja*).

Every human or hobbit starts with 3 slots for weapon skills (which may or may not be ever used) and 3 NWP slots at "adulthood". If they spend 2 slots to learn a =91soft style=92 martial arts, their AC goes down by 3 in addition to being able to attack for 1 hp of damage per blow. A hard style lowers their AC by 1 but allows them to do 1-4 points of damage with hand or foot. Such training, however, should be infrequent in non-oriental lands. Thus, one could only hope to be trained by a wrestler or boxer (physical education) and gain some increased skill with pummeling and grappling.

For those students that DO train under a martial arts instructor continuously, they should gain one slot per year to add to their skill (Learn special maneuvers found in the *Complete Book of Ninja*). Most commonly such students will be found in the aristocracy.. which would train their sons/daughters in this manner if a suitable teacher were to be found. Indeed, in human lands with a tradition of "fencing" among nobles, a special institution of instructors may be warranted. Under such circumstances, young lords (still level-less, typically) would be taught a highly disciplined art of fencing that would mirror the Oriental Martial Arts in some ways. These lads could choose "hard", "hard/soft", or "soft" fencing styles as per martial arts in the Complete book of Ninjas. Hard style reduced the AC by one, but also does +2 points of damage with the rapier. "Hard/soft" style reduces the AC by two, but does normal damage with the blade. "Soft" style reduces the AC of the practitioner by three, but does -2 damage due to it's focus on defense and not attack. A rich student.. or one financially supported by a lord.. might be able to specialize in

this Fencing style, just like one could specialize in MA. Combining this teaching with double specialization in One hander style specialization from the FHB could result in an additional -2 modifier to the fencer's AC. Lads, such as these, would gain one WP slot per year of training to purchase "special maneuvers" a la the *Complete Ninja's Handbook* or others at the DM's discretion. Eventually, however, they reach the limit of their trainer's ability to teach.. and ca n no longer progress in this fashion.

Those not fortunate enough to be wealthy, must make due by learning to use normal everyday items in self-defense. Thus, a housewife might wield her rolling pin against her hubby enough to wield it against an attacker. With three weapon slots, each civilian might have three weapons they'd be reasonably familiar with (and not suffer a -4 penalty for using a weapon in which they are not proficient).

But, so far we've only spoken about the warrior like paths.. what of the roguish ones? For these, I'd simply use the MotRD proficiency system, where they use one of their Initial 3 NWP slots to buy a thiefly skill. Every 3 years, they get another slot to increase this skill, or buy a new one. (Assuming they have someone to train them).

**Spellcasters:**
Mages? Unless you allow Hedge-wizards (for whom every spell is a NWP), only one in 1000 humans or hobbits can learn magic. Others simply have no talent for it. Same, of course, goes for psions.

Clerics? Personally, I prefer the majority of clerics to be non-spellusers. Lacking any mystical powers, these clerics teach and lead much like our modern priests, ministers, and rabbis would. Perhaps they gain a few free NWPs that are pertinent to their deity or calling. Perhaps not. If you like the idea of hedge wizards (as presented above), perhaps a few will have some miracle they=92ve learned to produce by expending a proficiency slot on it. Clerics should, of course, be able to recognize those people with the touch on them (commonly at rites of manhood, baptisms, or even birthing.)

**Mundane Professions:**

For mundane professions, a person should gain a +1 to the proficiency check for duties related to their job/means of living per 5 years of age for a human or hobbit. Some jobs, logically, would peak at middle age and allow no more advancement (such as manual labor) .. others, such as a scribe or sage could continue advancing until senility sets in with advanced age. DM's call, of course.

Dwarves, Gnomes, and Elves (with their longer lifespans) gain such a free slot only once in every 50 years of practice. This comes from a powerful instinct to do things the way they've always been done, and not experiment to fix something that's not broken. Thus, these long lived races fall into a routine.. and perhaps stop to enjoy life more than fretting away their life in their shops.

**Deities' Bless:**

If one has active deities in the game world, these forces might occasionally be willing/able to awaken an individual to the touch with a special blessing. It might also be interesting to allow subjects of a Bless spell to act as if enlightened for its duration (gaining xp for the time they are blessed). Sometimes, perhaps when the need is dire for someone to protect the people/faith. Sometimes, perhaps, for one who holds and extremely devout faith and/or alignment.

Sometimes, perhaps, when someone with the touch has died nearby. [Ie, a PC dies in an adventure only to find the blacksmith "awakened" to the touch and placed in the control of the player. This PC could be given a vision they their god to join up with the party.. perhaps not.]
If having one hero die and another awaken strikes the fancy of the DM or players. It might also be interesting if one is able to pass on their "touch". Take for example, Zorro: a man who's fought for the people for over 30 years and is tired, ready to step down. It may be possible for said hero to train a replacement. At the end of this training, the old Zorro passes on his "touch" to the new. The old Zorro would then no longer be able to gain xp or advance in levels, but a new "Zorro" has been created for the people, one with the energy and ambition of youth to help him. Thus, every PC can be a hero and understands a little more about their uniqueness compared to the common man. They have been touched by a greater power and given a potential far

exceeding the general populace. Perhaps the dwarven shaman has seen this or a seer, witch, or brujha, decreed it. One could suggest that in the distant past, Seraphim bred with mortals and their genetic legacy surfaces occasionally in the mortal races.. giving rise to those mortals known to have the "touch of the gods" upon them. Perhaps it's only fate at work.

Robert Sweeney

# Darkon And Lost Memories

**By J.W. Mangrum**

There is nothing to support the idea that after the events depicted in the *Grim Harvest* series this leeching power of Darkon (Necropolis) has faded away, so this domain retains its memory-draining qualities in the current Ravenloft campaign. What are the means of getting back one's own memories then? According to canon material, there are some.

The easiest way to get your memories back is to cross the border. The moment you step out of Darkon, your true memories return. (*Death Unchained* was wrong in this case.)

Other methods involve getting inside Azalin's library in Avernus, not an appealing proposition.

Here there are three methods to recover your memories:
1. Find the book of your life and burn it in a magical fire.

2. Sprinkle *Dust of Disappearance* on the persons name in the *Book of Names*.
[In the module *From the Shadows* it says that there is a "Book of Names" in Azalin's library. When someone stays in Darkon, their name is writen in that book. When that happens their memories are lost. To get your memories back, you'd have to break into Castle Avernus, get to the library and erase your name from the book.]
Both of these options are only temporary fixes; if you stay in Darkon, 1D4 months later the same problem will crop up.

3. Cross out the individual's name in the Book of Names with a *Quill of Law*. It isn't likely you'll have a *Quill of Law*, but if you did this would permanently "delete" you, granting immunity to the memory drain.

John W. Mangrum

# Dealing With Necropolis

**by Randir**

The following are a list of historical and artistic references that may help you create a believeable atmosphere for the Necropolis, and deal with the attitudes of undead PCs.

**First Step: Playing the Same Game**

Under the *Requiem* rules, you end up with a bunch of UNDEAD with very AD&Dish types. These classifications tend to do something utterly terrible to the setting, they IGNORE that these lost souls are all individual people.

Right off the bat, the worst thing you can do is slump, or allow your players to slump into the standard AD&D mentality that UNDEAD are monsters that can be turned by clerics, and are immune to sleep charm and hold spells.

Each SOUL, (and I stress the notion of soul) was once the animating force of a living breathing person who had needs and desires. These souls however are now either trapped by clinging on to this past, or they are lost unable to find the other side; What does this mean for the population of the Necropolis? A lot..

Okay so now we are atleast thinking of the undead as individuals, who are fettered by their pasts. Much more easy to believe and much more complex intellectually. But how do they differ from the rest of us?

Unlike the rest of us, they can no longer change the life they lead. Guilt festers, anger remains unspent, love lies lost. Hence where the society of the living is based upon survival and creating memories, the society of the dead is based upon self destruction and reflection. This creates a number of different mentalities; among the dead:

*Melancholy:* the dead being haunts without hope the last remaining remnants of its previous life. It collects what fleeting memories it has and simply waits out eternity

*Dreaming:* the dead creates an elaborate fantasy, or simply lives in a state of personal delusion that mimics its own personal version of heaven or hell, depending on the individual's convictions.

*Denial:* the dead does not realize or acknowledge that it is no longer living. They continuously go through the motions of living and the small things in life give them enough joy to survive.

*Judgement:* and then some of the dead actively carry out the act of final judgement upon the damned. Firmly convinced that each must meet its final reward, these purposeful souls forge fitting afterlives for those unfortunate enough to cross their paths.

The main thing to remeber is that the dead are but SHADOWS, they imitate life but not perfect and with definition. I would suggest that most of the weak willed shortly after the cataclysm would cease to exist due essentially psychic starvation. As shadows they need a form and a light to give them shape. The form comes from objects (anchors) from their previous life, and the light comes in the form of memories and emotions. Memories, Judgement: they are the keys to creating believeable characters for the Necropolis.

**The Setting**

The dumbest thing about the city of Il Aluk is that those who go there become undead. Simply put no one should go there anymore for any reason. In effect your best bet is to treat it as it always was that way, and now it is merely an abandoned region in northern RL. If one were to travel there, they would find the effects of the undead, a city without life, with moldy last meals half eaten.

How one draws living characters into Necropolis is by their staying there. All places have memories, like old houses have character and sometimes whisper stories. In the Necropolis, often while one is alone or reflective its memories from before it was whipped off the face of RL play out including new characters. What about all the undead you might ask? Simply put they aren't

there. They exist only in the past, and in the memories and dreams of the living. In the words of Tasha Yar: "No goodbyes, just good memories"

The rest of Darkon should be treated as Europe during the Bubonic Plague. Huge empty areas with a few remote dwellings cut off from the rest of the world. Human population next to nill. House or two here and there, with the occasional city half populated by now very rich grief stricken people (like at the begining of the Renaissance).

Since this all parallels so vibrantly with the Bubonic Plague and rebirth of Europe there after in the Renaissance, I think this is the perfect time to work Darkon proper into a human centered setting. Think of it this way:

"A few old ladies tell stories about elves, fairies, and dwarves. About how this court of unbaptized spirits frolic in the woods worshiping their old gods. Now they are but stories, and the light of science has stamped out superstition. Yet in the backwaters people still leave out bowls of cream and strawberries for the little people."

The vast majority of the demi-human population of Darkon has been whiped clean. Those who do remain have retreated to he deep forests and way from their human ken who brought about the destruction of fair Darkon. This is a perfect time to draw the races into the Seelie and Unseelie courts, and to bring out the copy of *A Mighty Fortress* cause Darkon can be made very Gothic now...

I think the proper attitude is captured in one of the RL adds. The picture of the angel sitting on the top of the tombstone. Everything is frozen unmoving and alone in a state of remembrance. Counter Pointed with the death of Magic (the old ways) and the March of Progress. Science is the new religion of Darkon, with the darkness of ignorance and superstion relagated to old wives, and their elvin stories. With Azalin no more, and the odd memory warping properties of Darkon this is not much of a stretch, and then it fits quite nicely into an Elizabethan Ravenloft.

**Summary:**

The *Grim Harvest* should be treated as the Bubonic Plague, and it whipes out a large portion and the entire infrastructure of Darkon.

Darkon's odd memory warping properties can be invoked to do three things:
1) The Undead of the Necropolis exist only in the Memories and Dreams of the living (they aren't physically there in our world). Places have memories, and relection draws out the memories of the dead in the burnt out shell of the Necropolis.

2) In the remaining cities of the lands of Darkon, there are fewer people who have all inhereted a large sum of cash. The *Grim Harvest* not only marked the death of Azalin, but that of Magic as well. The people of Darkon have a new religion, the religion of science. Leonardo DaVinci would feel right at home.

3) In the back country where the paganus (the country folk) live there remains a greater retention of the old ways. Deep in the forests and mountains, outside the realm of man the last remains of the fairies (magical races / demi-humans) hold up divided into the Summer and Winter courts... Old Women tell stories of ghosts and magic.. But no civilized person would believe them...

# Death Of Player Characters

## by R. Sweeney

Here's a possible way of handling PCs' death, the afterlife and the way of creating a new PC. The spirit of the deceased player ascends to the judgement. The god which looks over that player (or race) sits in judgement over the PC. A tribunal of other spirits sits with the diety to judge the player.

DM plays the major deity, the other players play the spirits. The DM turns to each of the players and describes their spirit. The old character will be judged by a 'jury of his peers'. That means the other PCs are playing spirits of the player's 1) race 2) class 3) alignment 4) sex. Each PC only matches one description. Also include the patron spirit of stupidity and rudeness.

Now go over the deceased player's accomplishments, trial, tribulations, and failures. Recap their number 'stupid' moments (and laugh). Do a sort of 'best of' as well.. what will the bards sing of this fallen hero?

### Race

The spirit of the player's race judges him as per a standard member of that race. Was he a good dwarf, elf, gnome, etc.? Did the character take racial concerns to heart or accomplish great feets for his race? Judge on a scale of 1 to 10. (Role play the rational for the decision).

### Class

The spirit of the player's class speaks next. Judge the player according to the goals/aspiration of his class. Was the warrior brave in battle, the priest pious and pure, did the mage quest for knowledge? Are their deeds fabled and renouned to others of their class? Judge on a scale of 1 to 10.

### Alignment

The third spirit to speak is the spirit of the deceased's old alignment. Once again, the judgement is on a scale of 1 to 10.

**Sex**

The fourth spirit judges the actions of the character regarding to his old sex in relation to other sexes.

**Stupidity**

The judge of stupidity comes next. He speaks of the player's various blunders and other stupid things.. even if they player didn't know it was a stupid thing at the time. He judges on a scale of 1 to 10, of course, he ranks really stupid things as a 10 and boring people as a 1. His score is reversed when calculated later.

**For Campaigns with Characters of Level 1-10**

Now, the DM adds up the scores and divides by the number of judges. This number (which should be less than 10) reflects the level at which the new character is generated. 9 is 90%, etc...

**For Campaigns with Characters of Level above 10**

The DM adds up the scores and divides by the number of judges. He then multiplies this number for 10 and subtract the result from 100. The result is the % of XP of the old character that the new character loses.

Ex: the result from the judgment is 3, so 100 - (3x10)= 100-30= 70. The new PC will start with 70% less of the old PC's XP, so if the dead PC had 100.000 XP, the new will start with only 30.000 XP

A new character is generated fairly of the level indicated. If the DM makes sure that this 'scenario' comes across as a season recap fairwell type TV episode, the player should enjoy all the attention and recover from the shock of finding their player dead.

PS: I would have the new player come back as a class and race he didn't play the last time around. Thus an elven fighter/mage/cleric is a thief of some other race. This encourages the PCs

not to multiclass out the yin-yang in the future. IMHO a character that can do everything doesn't need to cooperate with the other players as much.

<div align="center">Alternative To Death</div>

If you want to keep the PCs alive however, work out some scale for your campaign. For instance:

- 100% of points (everyone gave him a 10 - god of stupid gave him 1)
  Character is at 1hp: no negative effects.
- 90% Minor loss: amputation of a finger, earlobe, etc.. cosmetic.
  PC is a 0 hps but stable. Healing revives, but cannot restore minor loss.
- 80% Serious Loss
  Disfiguring scar -1 CHA (or Comeliness if used).Some loss of mobility or function: wandering eye, 2-3 fingers missing, nerve damage resulting in loss of feeling or pain in affected area, limping, backpain preventing serious lifting.PC at -1 hps and bleeding out for 1-4 days even if 'healed'.
- 70% Loss
  Loss of hand, hobbled food, shattered jaw.
  Nightmares of "death blow". 5% chance per night resulting in -1 to horror checks the following day.
  Hps at -5 and 'bleeding'. Coma for 1-4 weeks. Permenant brain damage -1 INT or -1WIS.
- 60% Major loss
  Amputation of major limb (arm, leg.. etc..) or loss of one eye, loss of one ear.
  Hps at -8 and 'bleeding' Coma for 2-8 weeks.
  Suffers attentions of Nightmare Court while comatose (haunted by them occasionally t hereafter).
- 50% Serious Head Injury
  -2d4 points INT and WIS.
  -8hps and coma
- 40% Paralysis (both legs)
  Possible amputation (50%).
  -8hps and coma

- 30% Paralysis from the neck.

  -9hps and coma

- 20% Pact with Death is the only way to survive.

  Below 20% no chance to avoid death.

But you should make up your own table. You may want to save only characters getting better than 75% of avaliable points.... it's up to you.

Notice, I have motives behind my system. Players tend to take races for the bonuses they impart, but deviate significantly from the norm with those characters' behavior (for example, they don't act like elves). While characters can be different (a good Drow) they should be very rare. By using these rules, Min/Maxers have something else to think about when creating a character (since min/maxing this rule requires roleplaying). I could add "judges" for: Karma: Player/DM interaction. If player argues a lot less points.

Evil: Evil PCs get a -2 to Karma.

Chaotic: -2 to Karma score.

Excessive Gamespeak: -1 to Karma Score.

Family: +1 if the PC has family members.

Love: +1 if PC ever 'fell in love'.

Quest Points: +1 per exceptional quest. (DM determination upon Quest Completion) History: 1 to 10 about the Character's history.

Motivation: 1 to 10 on character's motivation to adventure.

You might like some other system.. for instance having everyone 'vote' on each category.. out loud or silently by place votes in a hat. (DM adds them up and divides.) That allows more 'fairness'.. the player can't claim the DM doesn't like them.

Robert Sweeney

# Domains of Dread and Real World Countries

**By A. Ray**

Here's a long compilation of the known Domains of Dread and the suggested real world counterparts. Take this list as an inspiration source in order to better understand the cultural background and customs of the people living in the different domains.

Al Kathos - Libia or Tunisia

Avonleigh - anywhere in England

Barovia - Romania

Blaustein - one of the isles in the North See off the coasts of Germany

Bleak House - somewhere in Holland

Bluetspur - no real connection (HPL's alien worlds)

Borca - northern Italy or Moldavia (for the people's names)

Cavitius - Serbia (see explanation for Tovag)

Claviera - Austria or Liechtenstein

Darkon - Russia (because it's big, has similar locations and has tense relationship with Prussia - Falkovnia- and Romania -Barovia-)

Dementlieu - France (Normandy or Bretagne) or Belgium

Demise - any of the small isles of Greece

Dominia - Isola d'Elba in Italy or one of the Channel Islands

Falkovnia - Prussia or Wallachia

Farelle - Luxemburg

Forlorn - Scotland

Ghastria - in the Baltic region

G'Henna - Algeria or Israel

Har'Akir - Higher Egypt

Hazlan - Turkey

House of Lament - England or New England (see the novel *Haunting on Hill House*)

I'Cath - China

Ile de la Tempete - a small isle off the northern coasts of France

Invidia - central Italy

Kalidnay - Siria, Libanon or Israel

Kartakass - Bohemia or Austria

Keening - Wales (or maybe one of the Hebrides)

Kislova - Albany or Poland

Lamordia - Switzerland (no sea however), Schleswig-Holstein (northern tip of Germany) or Denmark

L'Morai - any small village in the mountains of Italy or Switzerland

Markovia - Malta or Cyprus

Mordent - England

Nebligtode (Todstein & Graben Islands) - Orkneys or Shetlands

Nidalia - Spain

Nosos - Liverpool or the Ruhr Basin in Germany

Nova Vaasa - Austro-Hungarian Empire

Odiare - somewhere in the Alps, maybe Sudtirol

Paridon - London (Whitechapel)

Pharazia - Persia or Saudi Arabia

Richemulot - France (central)

Risiblos - somewhere in France

Rokushima Tayoo - Japan

Sanguinia - Bulgaria

Saragossa - could be near Sicily (ever heard about the monster Cariddi that dwelt in the Strait of Messina? -ref. Homer's Odyssea) or Indian Ocean

Scaena - anywhere in a theatre (probably a French one)

Sea of Sorrows - Atlantic Sea

Sebua - Lower Egypt

Shadowborn Manor - somewhere in Yorkshire

Ship of Horror - in the North Sea

Sithicus - no real world connection

Souragne - Louisiana or Haiti

Sri Raji - India

Staunton Bluffs - England (Dover) or Maine

Tepest - Ireland, Wales or Black Forest (Germany)

Thornewood - no real world connection (it's a mad brain's product after all)

Timor - the marikith could live in the sewers and catacombs of Rome (side note: Timòr is the italian poetic word for "fear")

Tovag - Croatia (only because of its relationship with Serbia, no real world connection otherwise)

Valachan - Brazil or the Black Forest in Germany

Vechor - Greece

Verbrek - the Black Forest in Germany or Scotland (see the movie *American Werewolf in London*)

Vorostokov - Siberia

Wildlands - Congo (Black Africa) or Brazil

Winding Road - anywhere (Scotland or New England)

Zherisia - see Paridon


PS: note that IMO the Scandinavian lands (Norway, Sweden and Finland) have not the requisites to "host" anyone of the domains.


Alanik Ray

# Horror Techniques

## by Randir

The primary goal every Ravenloft DM should have is a suspension of disbelief. The way that one creates horror in a novel is through association with the characters and villians, the same is true of a RPG.

## Step 1: Player Characters

The player characters themselves must be realistic individuals. This is the primary reason why so many on this list, or who play Masque of the Red Death, realize characters with lower stats, and less outlandish classes and special abilities, are necessary for RL to really work.

The players must be able to identify with the characters they are playing. Such characters should concievably exist in a REAL WORLD setting. As such it is generally not a good idea to have someone who doesn't believe in magic or the occult playing a wizard in RL.

Also it is vitally important that while the character share some aspects of the player's personality, the creation of an idealized self in the form of the character must also be avoided. In the end if you are really going to scare your players, you have to have representations in the game that are easy for them to adopt and associate with.

And above all, NEVER KILL A CHARACTER, rather the character must choose and embrace his fate.

## Step 2: Supporting Cast

Once you have characters that are real enough, then you have to worry about creating things that are real to them as well.

Family members, associates, passing interests, should all be fully detailed realistic characters, who are generally not to be modeled after people the PLAYERS know in an obvious fashion.

Keeping the list of supporting cast to a minimum allows you to work on each of these characters more closely.

And you should only kill them sparingly. Unlike Star Trek, the extras are not just cannon fodder for a new alien horror. They are what makes the setting real.

**Step 3: Villains**

The third major aspect of any campaign are the bad guys. However, an effective horror game can not rely on the typical movie notions of horror. Gore, sudden visual suprises, and mindless slaughter acts well in a passive medium, but role playing is active.

As such, the villans must also be characters who the players can associate with, that COULD exist in reality beyond or within our daily existance.

The humanity of each villain is especially important. No matter how alien it appears, how gruesome its crimes, it is vitally important that it displays some aspect of human nature. The notion, "I could do that" or "I am capable of that" should be a realization every PLAYER makes when he finds out the truth. And there is where the horror results.

The realizations of how fragile the worlds we create in our daily routines, of how limited our understanding, and of the range of human ability, are what drives each player deeper into the right frame of mind.

**Step 4: Execution**

Attention to small things is very important. When playing a horror game you want to play with the PLAYER's subconscious. Inflections of things you say, the timing of when you speak, and even the choice of words can have a strong impact on how the Players feel.

In general, place yourself in the character's shoes at all times, your pulse should quicken, your hands shold get sweaty, and your breathing should be slightly erratic. If you do this then what

you say will have the right impact. And to your supprise if your body gives off fear the players will catch it.

Also make sure you space your words, often slowing down and thinking things out a little, giving players time to reflect on what is going on helps both of you.

**Step 5: No Distractions**
The last thing to do is to avoid encounters and elements in the setting which draw you from the story. Combat should be used sparingly, and have very little horror value itself, although the threat of combat is much more useful.

Dice should be rolled in such a way as to make them invisible. (I have a pad of black velvet just for rolling dice on to avoid making noise even during combat)

Magic should be kept low key, or rationalizable (so you can still have characters who don't believe in it...). The trappings of the occult are much more useful anyways.

In the end, you really just have to believe that you are part of the story, and happen to have just enough tallent as a story teller to get your Players to believe also.

Bright lights and munchies should be used as a BREAK from gaming and not brought into the game. Edible props however can serve as a temporary reprieve.

# Magic And Power-Gamers In Ravenloft

**What Is Good For The Goose, Is Good For The Gander:**

Tell the players: "What goes for you, goes double for the villans". If they can buy magical items in shops, so can the bad guys. If they have enough money to buy a +3 vorpal sword, the villans have that much money too.

Evil NPCs use plentiful potions and scrolls, nearly using up their supply when the PCs finally kill them, or falling from a great height and crushing the potions, resulting in an alchemical goo from their admixture. (Create a suitable monster called Alchemical Goo).

NPC Wizards commonly have, and always use, Staves of Power: before they die, the use retributive strike, which hits the PCs and destroyes all that villain's MANY magical items.

**Invulnerable Monsters:**

Werewolves that they find are Greater Ravenloft Werewolves and can only be harmed buy pure silver weapons that are UNTAINTED by foreign magic.

Vampires they meet in Ravenloft are Greater Raveloft Vampires, and automatically gain the benifits of a ring of vampiric regeneration, with the exception that even their spells and missile attacks allow them to heal.

Have them fight a ghost which is completly invulnerable unless they uncover his corpse. Create villains who are "nulls", that is completely immune to any and all magical effects. Magical swords, weapons, or effects touched by magic pass harmlessly through them. A normal fire, started by magical means, does not harm them.

Create "Null Zones" where all magic ceases to function.

**Destruction Of Items:**

- Rust monsters devour magical swords and plate;
- Crystalmists shatter their weapons;
- Thieves steal their items (pick pockets) and use these items against the party;
- Falling into a bog-trap, the PCs must pull themselves out... only to find that they have lost several important items while in the bog (a passive form of Mud Man which takes magic items on which to feed);
- Shadowyn attacks: like vampires, these creatures drain one magical item per successful attack. This feeding heals them to full hps each time they drain and item.
- Shattersword: the villan has an item that cuts through (destroys) armor and weapons wielded by the opponent. The PCs gain this weapon and keep destroying their opponent's magical items.

**Turnabout Is Fairplay:**

Unleash a Mindstorm on them which inverts stats, ability scores, and reverses magical plusses on items.

Use frequent Charm spells to turn the PCs against one another. Throw in regular dopplegangers and/or the doppleganger plant to make them fight themselves. Have a mirror of opposition trap create doubles of themselves... that flee and plot the original character's downfall.

Robert Sweeney
[Who DMs to a player that wants to ride a dragon... Just Say No!]


**In Regards To The Munchkin Players Who Want Magic Items:**

Set it up so that they get a job retrieving magic items. The thing is, all the items are cursed. Some of the items hold the spirits of powerful evil creatures, others require a death to activate, etc. This is like this *Friday the 13th: the Series* on the Sci-Fi Channel (not the horrible movies). Then, get them in situations where the characters <u>must</u> use these items. *Forged of Darkness* is good for these type of items.

<u>Example 1</u>: One of the characters is infected by a virus (shadow, psionic, combustion, etc.). They have just retrieved a syringe that can cure any disease. However, before the syringe's healing properties work, the needle must be driven into the brain or heart of a living sentient being.

<u>Example 2</u>: The party is given a sword from their patrons collection of cursed items (the party thinks it's just regular magic items) and some background in a historical text on the sword. The sword is just a sword until a ritual involving a death (or other suitablly unpleasant activity) is performed to waken the spirit of the sword. Meanwhile, a werewolf is stalking a nearby village, and the parties sword just happens to be the only thing that will kill it. And, once they do slay the beast, this allows the swords spirit to escape...the sword is actually the phylactery of a very angry lich who possesses the werewolf's corpse and escapes with the sword...

<u>Example 3</u>: One of the items is a make-up box which when heart's blood is added to the make-up, boosts charisma when used. However, the make-up wears out after several days, and takes as much charisma as it adds (i.e. the character becames beautiful, then ugly). This loss is permanent but a second application of make-up restores the artificial beauty. Each new application of make-up requires fresh heart blood and therefore, the death of another person. The next time the make-up's effects last 2/3 as long and the loss of charisma is even greater. If you keep contracting the time and dropping the charisma, the player becomes a addict to the make-up...

Note however, that this collector is the only one like it in the entire demiplane. The curse item collector is a unique individual laboring under a curse or geas or working for the Gentleman Caller or similar force. No item he/she collects is normal, they are all malignant and accursed.

THIS IS A UNIQUE CHARACTER AND SHOULD NOT BE THE ONLY THING THE CAMPAIGN IS BASED ON.

Chris Nichols

[...bloody munchkins...]

# Magic Items In Ravenloft

**By R. Sweeney**

**Magic Weapons:**

Magic weapons are generally unecessary. Possessing them simply means they party must have more powerful monsters thrown at them. Giving a fighter a +1 weapon effectively raises him a level. (Not exactly the same, but the effect is similar). That's what experience (XP points) is for. The first weapon which the PC drools over being allowed to posses should be an exceptionaly craften **normal** weapon. Skillfully made weapons of iron, steel, cold iron, silver, or even nickel should be the first offerings to the party. And they should be paced at such a level that they are seen as Important items. Later, you can get into the enchanted items... which should be rare than exceptionally made weapons and held more dear.

PCs should realize that more powerful warriors do exist and that thieves **will** try to steal their prized possesions. In fact, I would support having a warlord challange the PC warrior into a duel and 'win' the newly acquired magical weapon from him. Very frustrating but magic items should be rare enough that the PCs fully understand that flashing obviously magical weapons will incite greed and evny in all who watch.

**Magic Armors:**

Once again, generally a silly thing. Thieves shouldn't be trying to hack it out in combat. They can make do with leather armor. Mages, ditto. Clerics and warriors can slap on armor all they way up to full plate armor before there is any need for enchanted armor.

Enchanted armor should be rarer and more expensive that Full Plate Armor. As for enchanted weapons, enchanted armor (one known as such) should be the target of thievery or duels. PCs should be not be captured all the time, but during the course of their adventures they should of course wind up as prisoners or hostages at some point. Any obviously magical items find new (more powerful) owners. The PCs can try to track down these new owners, but they will have to gain some experience before they are ready to take back their items. The thief characters can be

important assets at this time, since they know underworld contacts and can retake the armor by stealth from a physically superior foe.

**Conclusion:**

In short, the possesion of magic items can and should be a good plot anchor for endless adventures. Magic items should fill onlookers with greed or loathing depending on their view of magic. Those who loathe magic, of course, try to destroy the foul item. The greedy seek to steal it. If a PC must die for this to happen, so be it. (To the NPC mind... even good NPCs may feel the PC isn't using the item to it's full potential)

In Ravenloft, there should always be a price for power... sometimes minor for goodly aligned weapons. But for the darker kind... look at *Forged of Darkness*.

I would not, however simply desire to toss a +1, +2 or +3 weapon or armor into the game. They are bland, boring, and trite. I'd prefer something like Ogre Fist (see Dark Items section).

Robert Sweeney

# Paladins in Ravenloft

**Official Version**

**By David Wise (Kargat Chief)**

Let me begin with a point that certainly could have been made more clearly in *Domains of Dread* (DoD), but it wasn't expanded upon because the Kargat didn't anticipate this objection: to us it seems rather obvious that paladins would not be native to the Demiplane. When DoD says that paladins are not native to Ravenloft, it specifically says "paladins of Toril." The point of this specific reference is that Realmsian paladins are more manifestly attached to the gods than are generic AD&D paladins (from the PHB), whose divine connections are only evidenced indirectly, through words like "holy" (sword), "sin," and "penance." In the Forgotten Realms, you meet paladins of Tyr, Moradain, and so forth. These characters swear fealty <u>directly</u> to a lawful good god, and their holy status depends <u>directly</u> upon serving the will of that chosen power of the Outer Planes. That vital link to a god is so intrinsic to the nature of "paladinhood," and so vitally important in the context of the RAVENLOFT setting, that the Kargat simply couldn't justify native orders of paladins.

I suppose one might envision a native Ravenloft paladin whose status is purely philosophical, who rigorously leads a life of law and order, whose purity qualifies him to exercise "holy" powers, but where would those powers come from? By choice or by force, the gods do not involve themselves in the affairs of Ravenloft, and priests and paladins alike are effectively sequestered from their gods. (Where paladins and priests get their powers from is a separate question, but for the record, they do <u>not</u> come from through any direct conduit to the Outer Planes and the gods there.)

So, if a "native Ravenloft paladin" has no access to a lawful good god but receives paladin abilities for leading a righteous life, is he really a paladin? Or is he a self-deluded fighter with his heart in the right place?

Now let's consider more practical aspects of the proposition. Paladins are like shining beacons in pitch darkness, drawing attention to themselves by their pure goodness. Entering a domain instantly alerts the lord to a paladin's presence, and drawing his holy weapon sends out a virtual homing signal. How could an order of paladins, whose members would certainly be sworn enemies of any darklord, possibly grow and thrive in a place like the Demiplane of Dread?

Of course, if you want a native paladin in your Ravenloft campaign, your DM has the ultimate authority to allow it. Perhaps your paladin is a local who became the squire of a paladin, and he trained you in the ways of his order before dying and passing his holy sword to you. Perhaps you convinced Alexi Shadowbane to teach you of the original Circle, and then convinced him to enlighten you in the ways of Belenus. Of course, your character must forever remain ignorant of the insurmountable wall between him and his god, and that he receives his abilities from who-knows-where. To understand the immeasurable gulf between himself and his god is guaranteed to trigger a crisis of faith in a paladin - without his god, he is nothing (and if he doesn't think that way, then he's not a paladin).

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**More Thoughts**
**by Brenton Miller**

The Complete Book of Paladins describes where a Paladin's power comes from if not from a god. I see no reason why a Paladin's powers can't be explained as coming from his own internal goodness and morality. The Dragonlance 5th Age rules for Mysticism (i.e. priestly magic) are described this exact way. Why is this explanation less logical than explanations for wizardly magic? And if you can have vampires that live off the blood of the living, creatures built from the sown-together parts of other beings, and undead spirits who live on solely because of the intensity of their anger and hatred, why can't you have a paladin who gains powers from the purity of his unswervable goodness?

One could ask why Ravenloft (RL), a land of evil, would create beings of good like a Paladin. Well, extending that logic, does this mean ALL natives of the Demiplane are evil? The thing

about goodness is that you strive to remain good when surrounded by evil (and temptation). If it were easy to be good, what use would one have for honor or discipline? I would suggest that people are born in RL just as they are born here in our very own world: with a choice. Specifically, the choice to do good or evil. The only difference is that the primary force governing RL is evil, thus it is very difficult to remain good.

Paladins could exist in RL, and could even come from natives, though I would agree they would have a difficult existence since they would be the minority and would be hunted down by every evil being around. That's why it would be extremely important for them to band together and defend each other. It seems to me the plight of a Paladin in RL could parallel that of an Avangion in Dark Sun. For those who don't know, an Avangion is a force for good in Dark Sun who goes through an intense, often centuries-long process to become such a force. They are constantly sought out and hunted down by the Dragon Kings who indisputably rule Athas, the land of the Dark Sun.

This continued struggling to do what is right when opposed by seemingly insurmountable odds is what spins the tales of heroes, and is what makes a Paladin a Paladin since this is their stock-in-trade.

Just in case anyone is interested, here's a Paladin I created for a PbeM: Kestus Armiger. He was created using the Complete Paladin's Handbook. He wasn't made for RL specifically, but he is a good example of a Paladin who doesn't worship a god. Similarly, he could be made to want to rid the world of vampires or some other undead (which is another kit in the CPHB), rather than evil wizards.

# Powerschecks Results for Munchkins

**By R. Sweeney**

Try to look at the Powerchecks as a downward death spiral, not an upward progression to the glory of darklord status. In the *Vampire* game, you start with a certain amount of humanity: if you lose that, you lose the character. You can be evil and still retain humanity, it is senseless acts of random violence or habitual disregaurd for humanoid suffering that looses humanity and the character.

Make Powerchecks just plain bad for munchkins or powergamers. In the case of a random hack and slahser or baby killer, make the good parts so minuscule that they cry and whine about their sissy dark powers check. Play up on the weaknesses, make them a freak that cannot gain acceptance or help from normal folk. Make them shunned even by evil creatures. Drive home the reality of the situation to the other PCs.

DM: "I know he's one of your fellow players, but how exactly do you think you'd respond of you and I were walking down the street and I threw a brick at a grandma's head? You'd think I was nuts, right? You'd have be arrested, right? Well, if your characer doesn't do these things, you're not roleplaying very well and I'll have to deduct xps."
DM: to bad player "Exactly why would these people *want* to keep your character around? If you can't come up with a good reason, I'm afraid I'll have to take over this character and have you roll up a new one."

**Good roleplayers doing evil things.**
Here are two characters: Talis Rosewood and Talis Wormwood, both characters I've played. Both could fail powerchecks for roleplaying.

Talis Rosewood is half-elven and very jealous of his elder brother, Turmeric whom was "Daddy's favorite". He doesn't have his brother's elven gifts, lifespan, or bubbling energy. He seems to be cursed to walk in darkness and shadow cast by his brother's glory. (He is, but that's

the machinations of an evil NPC). Talis believes that sometimes dark acts must be done for the greater good.. and his brother's too busy being smiling happy people to do what needs to be done. Talis resents that he must walk the path of darkness, but believes someone has to. Talis Rosewood would torture people if that was "the only way." He would not backstab his brother or anything like that. He's a good PC and the character loves his brother dispite all. Talis Wormwood grew up without family. Betrayed by everyone he ever trusted. Orphan. Also feels he has to walk in darkness, but he doesn't believe in 'goodness' of man. He will protect innocence at all costs, especially that of children. He would torture child molesters or child abusers and enjoy it.

Both are reasonably good characters that can be roleplayed falling down a darker path if that's what I want to do (actually, I intend to roleplay them comming up to the light, but that's just me.) So what do we do if roleplaying brings these two down? Well, firstly, the characters are supposed to be working up to the light, so each powercheck should cut to the core of the character in some way hurt them. For instance, the inability to drink wine, the the character loves that, partial blindness when exposed to the light of the sun: downward digression towards a Drow (The half-elf) or Ogre (the human). Things that make it harder for these two to gain the acceptance of others that they crave.

But, let's assume you have a non cooperative PC, with little actual character that almost seems to enjoy the path to darkness. The following are suggested downward spirals for even the munchkins.

**Way of the Warrior**
(transforms to ogre)
*The first check:* A nightmare about the murder.. as it happened. But from the murdered's point of view. (Unclean)
*The second check:* With the first attaction of the dark powers attention, the PCs dreams at night of his crimes.. from the victim's point of view, he sees their faces and hears their voices accusing him.. taunting him. He sees a young girl playing in the grasses, smiling and happy.. but her smile

fades away at the end of his blade and her mother's lamenting echoes through his mind. "You beast, You brute, you murderer, you villian. She was my child. I loved her. I loved her."

People surround him on all sides, villagers with torches.. he tries to fight them off but his sword is slow, clumsy and ineffective.. like trying to swing the sword through water..

A villager throws a stone which strikes him on the head.. his vision spins and he falls to the ground. He cannot move, he cannot defend himself. His head hurts and he can't stop. He can't close his eyes, he can't close his ears, he can move, he can't speak, he can't do anything but lie there as they stone him and burn him and kick him. He hurts, but he doesn't die. He tries to awaken, but cannot.

In the morning, he finds a trail of blood staining where his head had lain down and he finds a wound.. a bruies as if from a thrown stone at his temple. He finds it hard to concentrate and goes to the cleric who immediately treats him.. "There's been some blood pooling in your brain and behind your eyes.. I can stop the progression, but damage has been done and it's not responding to my magic."

The character feels a bit slower of mind.. (-1 to int), his vision is a bit blurry at times, and his beard grows more quickly.. and his forearms get a touch more hairy. He finds himself squinting against the light and always tries to find places in the shadows to sit.

The next time he gets angry, he finds his strength has gone up one point! But, sadly, when he's not angry he gets to strength bonus. (He must roleplay anger to get the point.) And either way, when in battle, his arms feel like lead and move slowly (-1 to hit and damage). Thus he's stronger.. but not when he wields a weapon.

*Another powercheck (3):* his blade is stained with the blood of his victims. Any weapon he draws in anger or murderous intent drips red blood. Any time he kills, the blade continues to bleed for 1d3 hours. Any weapon so bleeding can harm creatures only hit by magical weapons,

but is -1 to hit and damage. He grows more hair... this time on his back and chest. He must shave twice a day or grow a beard.

*Another powercheck (4):* his eyebrows grow together and he is -1 to hit when in conditions of bright light.. however he gains blindfighting NWP for free when in conditions of absolute darkness. He cannot use blindfighting NWP when there is light equal to torchlight or greater.. even if he closes his eyes. His eyelids grow translucient and any light in the room at night keeps him awake. He gets sunburns more easily.

*Another powercheck (5):* he gains more strength +1, but he has also gained 50 lbs of weight. All his clothing and armor are of the wrong size now and must be replaced. He starts to smell bad no matter how often he bathes and suffers a -2 to reaction rolls. He cannot eat anything but red meat... all other foods are vomited up. The meat must be rare.. very rare. If he eats any non-meat (even a piece of bread or glass of wine) he will lose 2 pts of strength for the day. He must eat 5 lbs of meat per day to gain his +1 to str. Failure results in no penalty, but he doesn't enjoy the increased strength. He gains half a pound of body weight for each day he eats 5 pounds of meat. Every 10 pounds gained slows him movement by 1/2" and forces him to get new clothes/armor. He begins having headaches at random intervals during which time he is –1 to hit and the DM dictates actions occasionally.

*Another powercheck (6):* his strength increases to 17 OR he gains a point of Con (if his str is above 17 already). His hairyness increases and his arms grow in length 3".. making him look funny and apelike. Warts appear on his body (one large one on his temple). When in combat, his dex begins to fall.. he loses 1 pt of dex whenever he wields a blade. When he wields a club, however, he suffers no such penalty.

*Another powercheck (7):* suffers constant migranes. Int and Wis fall by one point.. but he flies into a rage easily.. at which point he gains 18 con or 18/00 str. (50% chance of either) However, while in a rage, his mind is more open to mind control or mental attacks. He suffers an effective wisdom of 3 when enraged.

*Another powercheck (8):* looses one level of experience, but gains a magical weapon... during a painful night's dreaming a bone in his thigh breaks, ruptures and pushes out through the skin. (Looses all hps but 3.. make him roll a save vs death, but this does nothing). The trauma weakens him mentally and physically.. resulting in lower hps, higher thaco, etc.. he doesn't forget his battles, his body has just changed shape somewhat and he needs to relearn his moves... retrain his body. He has grown 3" more in the arms.

Examination by the cleric indicates that the bone jutting out of his thigh is actually a growing projection from his own leg.. and must be snapped off in order to heal the wound. The the other PCs can't break the bone.. they try but the pain is excruciating. The PC flies into a rage pounding the nearest PC. He then grabs the bone with his own hands and snaps it off.. passing out from the pain and at -5hps... bleeding to death unless the other PCs save him.

The bone club he broke off follows him everywhere. It always reappears if set aside or lost..at some point while he sleeps the next night it appears again.. jutting out of his thigh just like the first time. The club acts as per [Ogre's fist](Ogre's fist).

The affected leg goes gimp. The PC walks with a shambling limp (movement rate of 9" or 3" slower than his base movement.) His dex falls by 3 during melee as the leg isn't as easy to run/dodge on as it was before.

*Another powercheck (9):* PC must eat raw meat, nothing else, from a freshly killed corpse or vomit. Requires 10 lbs of meat per day. Grows 1/2" in height and 1/2 lb in weight per day that he eats all 10 lbs.. however, he will be as strong as an ogre (18/00 str) and gain an 18 con if he eats this required amount. Failure to do so reduces his str and con to 16.
Every time he sleeps, he leaves a shallow pool of blood behind.

*Another powercheck (10):* major cerebral hemorrage.. bleeds out eyes, nose, and ears for 1d10 points of damage per round until saves vs Death Magic at -10. (This effect follows all future powerchecks.. not just failures.. but the - to the save reflects his current stage of corruption.. thus at stage 11 the check is -11). Wisdom reduced to 3, Int reduced to 5. Gains tough hide of the

Ogre.. (get's ogre base AC). Str and Con are 18 normally and eating 10 lbs or raw meat a day increases this to 19.

*Another powercheck (11):* second bone club. Can wield both clubs at the same time with no penalty, but loses any profficency with non-club weapons. Has at least one hour of 'black out' every other day. (Dm controls the charcter). Rage causes blackouts (1 hr). In combat, must make a wisdom check or fly into a rage.

*Another powercheck (12):* grows to ogre height and weight.. but grossly fat (if not so already). Bone clubs re sprout over the next 1-2 weeks in enlarged size (2x normal size.. do 1-10 pts of damage). Sun burns him for 1pt of damage per round of direct exposure and he 'blacks out' when the sun sets at night.. DM controls character completely.

*Another powercheck (13):* Lord of a domain. PC has become Grendle from the Beowulf mythology. He no longer suffers any penalty for entering in combat, but has a problem with going berzerk. He is a twisted monster with a Chr of -5 (any seeing him immediately wish to destroy so ugly a creature.)

Sadly, the monster has fallen desparately in love with Esmerelda and must save vs spells or save her when she is in trouble regaurdless of personal risk. Esmeralda, however, is horrified by his appearance and shreaks in fear when he approaches. She hates him utterly .. for he has killed to 'protect her' from people in the past.

Destruction. If any harm should come to Esmerelda, the monster feels it. His permenant destruction comes about when Esmeralda grows to hate him enought that she pretends to love him.. lures him out in to the public claiming to love him.. and standing by him in front of all the people in the square. She has, however, set him up and the Ogre is chained out in the open with enchanted bonds.. as the sun rises up he Ogre slowly burns to ashes. Esmarelda laughs as he dies, breaking his heart and his will to live.

There he lies.. his skeleton chained to two strong posts. Everyday the sun rises and the bones scorch and with with pain. Every night, Esmeralda comes to tell the skeleton how much she despises him.. as she does so, the skeleton cries tears of blood. If Esmarelda fails to tell him that she hates him.. flesh begins to regrow on the bones.. if she forgets or fails to tell him that she hates him for a full week, he reawakens with 1 hp and the will to fight again... he pulls off his own arms and escapes into the woods.. where he will regrow the arms over the course of a month.

If Esmarelda dies, the Ogre falls in love with another woman who cannot return his love. His permenant death comes when his beloved betrays him.. and pushes a dagger into her own heart to seal the death of the 'horrid monstrosity'.

**Way of the Magi**
(transforms to shadow)
Picture an Arcanist, doing his research like a good boy. He becomes touched, tainted, corrupted by his reasearch slowly.

The first noticable effect is acute vision. His eyesight becomes thrice that of a normal man, but he also becomes highly sensitive to light. Sudden exposure to bright light causes him to be blinded for 1-4 rounds unless he saves vs rods. Thereafter, he suffers as if affected by a *blight* spell while in illumination equal to normal daylight or greater. But this isn't really the curse inflicted at this stage. The real curse is much more subtle. The Arcanist begins noticing any negative aspect of life. Looks of spite or hatefullness, thievery, whispered conversations in corners that he can hear.. side long glances at him as he walks down the street, shifty eyed theives lurking in darkness. Specifically, he will tend to notice any negative reactions towards himself. If someone leans over to whisper to their friend about him as he enters a room, he sees this and the glances in his direction as they talk. He begins noticing small things like how people's eyes constrict when they see something they don't like.. or dilate when the see something that arouses them.. especially, of course, when said knowlege pains him. For instance, noticing his girlfriend's eyes light up when her best friend walks in the room.

This goes on for awhile before he suffers the second curse. Now, his hearing has been increased. He gains +25% to all hear noise rolls/checks.

However, any sudden noise causes him to be stunned for 1-4 rounds unless he saves vs paralyzation. Once again, the true curse lies more sublty than this. Whispers are carried to his ears more easily than before. Now, when he sees those people whispering over in the corner, he can clearly hear what they are saying.. how they are plotting against him. Are those girls making fun of his scrawny knees? Do they laugh at him? "Him? Oh, I don't like him at all. Queer fellow if you ask me.. always so shifty-eyed.." Once again, he doesn't hear when they say *nice* things. Applying himself fully to his studies and ignoring those festering boils on the buttocks of humanity. He begins suffering headaches.. then full blow migranes. His Int increases by two points, but he cannot spend more than an hour studing without making a wisdome (willpower) check or be forced to break away from his studies and rest his weary eyes. Paranoia begins to set in as his increased intelligence aids him in 'catching' people who are plotting against him or talking bad about him. A form of luck follows him around. He's always in the right place at the right time to overhear any insult. Should the theif of the group steal or hold back anything, the character will serendipidously discover this.

After such curses drain the poor arcanist and convince him of the worst of human nature. He suffers and ever worse development. As he sleeps, he begins hearing the voices of other people in his head. He has developed ESP in a 60' radius but only with respects to people saying bad things about him or trying to lie to him. He reads the thoughts of these people while sleeping at first and then eventually while awake. He can't focus on just one voice/person however and more than one voice echoing in his head can lead to a migraine. This time, when he suffers a migraine or tries to concentrate heavily on something, the temples of his head pulse and swell.. veins stick out on his forehead.. making a gruesome sight. His eyes develop an obsessed look like studying or concentrating.

His eyes turn to those of cat's and he gains clairvoyance. Limited still to areas/people indenting him harm or thinking ill of him. At first, it displays itself as a queer ability to see and make out

reflections in any slightly shiny surface.. like a vase, cup, mug, or chandelier. Then later, it begins happening even without these surfaces or when he's asleep.

His ears turn into those of an elf, if human, or cat if demi-human. He gains clairaudience.. as above.

A series of even greater headaches develop. Splitting headaches that cause him to take to bed for days at a time. Whenever he intently stairs at someone, he begins to be gain the ability to *probe* their thoughts as per the Psionic power. He can learn all manner of bestial thoughts, habits, natures.. but anything good or pure is denied to him. A small crack appears in his forehead one day.. a small wound that won't go away. After several days, he can see a small eye buried behind a bit bloody flesh. He can cover the eye, but then he looses the ability to probe another's mind. However, with the appearance of the eye, those especially severe bouts of headaches vanish.. leaving him with only the mundane/normal migraines from before.
Time continues to pass and the victim's severe headaches come back as the eye grows larger and forms it's own socket above his natural eyes. The eye can sprout out of his head on a short eyestalk to look around.. (eyestalk can be as long as 3' or disappear entirely into the head). He now looks like one of those three eyed Salubri from Vampire the Masquerade when the eye is retracted and like a odd beholder kin when out on it's stalk. The eyestalk, however, comes with a greater ability.. the ability to *sense betrayal*. Now the Arcanist can tell any time anyone anywhere plots against him.. however he learns nothing of the person or nature of the plot. Leading to an every greater sense of paranoia. People who begins to become concerned about the eye are seen as plotting against the arcanist.. in other words any friends he used to have. Suffering full blown paranoia by now, the wizard digresses even further. When concentrating, his whole head seems to pulse and glow from within with a pale light. His hair falls out and as head pulses observant people can see what appears to be an eye inside his skull rotating around to look at things.. not clearly seen.. just a bulge and dark spot under the skin where the giant Iris would be. The wizard's eyes double in size .. as does his ears. He gains the ability to see as if with a *ring of x-ray vision*.

Diminutive eyes sprout all over the wizard's body.. giving him the visual powers of an eye of robes but making him look utterly and totally inhumane.

Any failure, flaw, or weakness is seen in anything. Any spell he attempts to create is 'riddled' with imperfections, flaws, and 'bugs'. Perfectionism and an obsession with detail sets in. Nothing can be out of place.. order.. order.. imperfect..

His head explodes. One big eye on top of his head that rotates around in 360 degrees. He gains the power of *foresight* as per the 9th level mage spell.

Such a character could be a domain lord. His realm is filled with disorder and chaos (to his eyes). He can hear and see everyone s negative reactions to him.. His laws for the 'common good' are obsessive, oppressive, tyrannical.. human liberties and rights become a thing of the past. But, at the same time, he's never happy. For obsession with perfection does not bring happiness.

Nothing's perfect.

Similarly you can have a Way of the thief (transforms to kobold) and a Way of the priest (transforms to zombie)

Robert Sweeney

# NATURE OF PRIEST SPELLS IN RAVENLOFT
## By C. Rice

Before I explain this, I thought I should give you the material I am referring to (from *Domains of Dread*). I realize now that it was unfair to refer to this material, since I am the only one who has it. Thus, here is the information under "The Absence of Power" in Chapter Eight*:* <u>The Path of the Priest.</u>

    "Many have come to believe that the gods have no interest in the Demiplane of Dread. To be sure, a great deal of evidence supports this opinion. Any priest, paladin, or pilgrim who has come from beyond the Misty Borders of Ravenloft will attest that the Land of the Mists feels strangely empty. Despite this, most priest spells still function, meaning that priests, clerics, and their ilk draw power for their spells from somewhere else. Some claim that the dark powers, for whatever reason, are answering the prayers of these wandering holy men and granting them spells. As with som much about the dark powers, however, it is impossible to know if this is true or not.

    "Another common belief asserts that the gods of the multiverse have some sort of agreement to leave the Demiplane of Dread alone. Some have even suggested that the dark powers have shut the deities out of the Realm of Terror. Those who espouse this theory point out that in the past, the dark powers have proven to be as powerful as any divine being. To be sure, it does seem likely that the dark powers might hold off the efforts of an individual deity, but could they resist the efforts of a coalition of deities? It is doubtful, but then again, how can humans judge things on so grand a scale?"

This is what I was referring to when I claimed that priests feel "cut off" from their gods. As for the source of their spells - No, I do not think the priests know where their spells come from. If they did, they might not use them anymore....

Cindi Rice
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# Ravenloft: Gothic Or Dark Fantasy Campaign?

**By Asplagis**

The things Ravenloft should be about no matter how much or little gothic you put in, are:

- Dark mood in general. From the villains to the land, everything is somehow mysterious and just not right. This "evil", eerie feeling should be the base of everything;

- Negative emotions in general (anger, fear, despair, sadness etc...);

- A certain feeling of being simply not good enough, always something or someone more powerful looming over the PCs;

- Entrapment and the feeling of being something of a prisoner at one point or another;

- Just simply unable to have any lasting peace. Something will eventually come up, usualy brings the things said before (dark mood, negative emotions etc…).

Now from this base you construct smart and interesting villains with enough leeway to introduce specifics afterwards. Now here you decide upon what the levels of gothicness have and don't need to have :

- So for example in a true Gothic Ravenloft women would be stuck in very rigid roles (the witch, the temptress, the innocent/virgin etc...) and the PCs would be average joes, hence the rules of AD&D would be modified to suit this. No demihumans or excessively rare (more like weird and darker versions of the usual... say an elf could be some dark forest spirit. An elven maiden could be some form of temptress that uses her charms to lure humans that come too close and kill them to protect the secret of her existance);

- Next up, maybe dark fantasy with semi-gothic influence. The PCs would have some magic (still very scarce though) and some power (maybe a few restrictions on the usual AD&D classes) and the roles of women would be much less uptight, so a female could play the role of Dr. Mordenheim or be Adam. Still the gothic cultural elements would be more or less in place with a few changes in them, so demihumans could exist, but would have something of a tough time;

- Then maybe dark fantasy with horror only, no specifics on gothic or not. The DM could decide to use some gothic elements, but still it is only dark AD&D with few changes

upon the system, so demihumans would face prejudice but would not be blamed for everything and wouldn't scare the populations or even have angry mobs after them. You could easily have demi-humans living with humans. Still the villains are dark and mysterious as is just about everything. The PCs would still see fear and horror, only they would be in much better position than usual for the other types of Ravenloft campaigns;

- Then high fantasy Ravenloft. Extreme cases could have something of a darker version of Forgotten Realms, with powerful lich lords ruling with their magic in everybody's face. Azalin and Vecna would fit in well here, if Azalin was still in one piece and if he admitted his real identity. Magic is not as common as the other places in the multiverse, but it exists and is more or less well known and accepted.

So with these categories you could have specifics that are strictly for a say high fantasy, others or true gothic etc.

Asplagis

# Ravenloft Languages
## by C.D. Nichols and J.W. Mangrum

**List of Spoken Tongues**

What languages are spoken in Ravenloft? We know that some domains speak languages familiar to various other AD&D worlds. But, is there a language or series of languages for the domains not drawn from standard realms?

A list of languages spoken in various domains:

Barovia, Borca, Dorvinia, G'Henna, Invidia, Markovia- Barovian (Balok)

Blaustein - Lamordian

Bleak House- Darkonese

Bluetspur- Illithid

Cavitius- something from Oerth

Darkon- Darkonese

Evenore- Darkonese

Falkovnia- Thenolian (Krynn)

Forlorn- Forfarian

Hazlan, Valachan- Thayvian

I'cath- something from Kara-Tur

Kalidnay- something from Athas

Kartakass- Faerûnian-Thayvian

Lamordia- Lamordian

Mordent, Dementlieu- Mordentish

Nebligtode- Heldannic or Alphatian (from Mystara)

Nova Vaasa- Faerûnian-Cormyrian

Richemulot- Richemulotian (a slightly different form of Mordentish)

Saragoss- something from Toril

Sithicus- Solamnic and Silvanesti (from Krynn)

Tepest- Tepestani

Tovag- something from Oerth

Vorostokov- Vos (from Cerilia)

## Other Notes On Languages

### *Abber*
Spoken: The Abber Nomads of the Nightmare Lands.
Derived From: Unlike any other language. Non-natives find it impossible to understand, although the Abbers can learn other languages.

### *Akiri*
Spoken: Har'Akir, Sebua. Also spoken by some of the slave-traders in Pharazia.
Derived From: Egyptian. The more common written language is non-hieroglyphic. Hieroglyphs represent the Ancient Akiri tongue.

### *Arak*
Spoken: The Shadow Elves
Derived From: Nothing in particular. Use a lot of hard consonants.
Most shadow elves also speak other languages of the Core.

### *Avergnite*
Spoken: Staunton Bluffs
Derived From: Not specified. Could resemble English, French, or any Gaelic tongue, I would suppose. The domain lord also speaks Avergnite, but his native tongue is most likely Stauntonian.

### *Balok*
Spoken: Barovia, Borca, Falkovnia, G'Henna, Markovia; a bastardized version is spoken in Invidia.
Derived From: Slavic languages from eastern Europe.

### *Darkonese*
Spoken: Necropolis (if you come from there, you're Necropolitan), Falkovnia. A constantly-evolving dialect may also be spoken in Vechor.
Derived From: The Common tongue of Oerth, most likely, which in turn was derived from Ancient Baklunish and Old Oeridian.

### *Dwarvish*
Spoken: Racial language
Derived From: Use German.

### *Elven*
Spoken: Racial language
Derived From: Use Welsh.

*Falkovnian*
Spoken: Falkovnia, Richemulot
Derived From: This is probably the Thenolian language. Taladas, unlike Ansalon, has no
Common tongue. If Falkovnian is derived from Thenolian, then it may have a very few words in
common with Silvanesti.

*Gnomish*
Spoken: Racial language
Derived From: Use Greek.

*Heldannic*
Spoken: Graben (Meredoth's domain)
Derived From: Heldannic is the native tongue of most people in Norwold, the region of Mystara
this domain was drawn from. Meredoth and the Graben family specifically probably also speak
Alphatian. (One of several "Common Tongues" from that world.)

*High Shou*
Spoken: I'Cath
Derived From: This is the language of Kara-Tur. Use Chinese.

*Italian*
Spoken: Odiare
Derived From: Latin.

*Kartakan*
Spoken: Kartakass, also spoken by some Kartakan expatriates living in Sithicus.
Derived From: Actually, Kartakan is not exactly its own language, but is distinct enough that I
chose to separate it. It is a musical dialect of Thayvian, apparently mixed with Sithican, or at
least a very elven tongue. It's very easy to learn for speakers of either language. There is also a
older Kartakan language quite distinct from that in common use. This old tongue is typically
only known by the elders, and is dying out.

*Lamordian*
Spoken: Lamordia
Derived From: Unspecified, but not difficult for a speaker of Mordentish to learn. Consider
Lamordian and Mordentish akin to Romance Languages, similar in enough ways that the speaker
of one may be able to pick out a few words of the other.

*Luktar*
Spoken: Gundarak, now spoken by the former Gundrakan natives in Barovia; may also be
spoken in Dominia. Dr. Heinfroth speaks it, at least. It may also be spoken by some of the druids
in Forlorn.
Derived From: Nothing in particular, as far as I know. It's a "sing-song language of soft, lilting
sounds." The Luktar word for vampire is *voishlacka*.

### Mordentish
Spoken: Mordent, Borca, Dementlieu, Richemulot, Verbrek; taught in the finer boarding schools, so spoken by many Core scholars.
Derived From: Probably something akin to Middle English. I recently compared this language to the Anglo-Saxon tongue spoken in England after the Battle of Hastings in 1066, where the upper classes basically spoke French and the commoners spoke English. More or less.

### Patterna
Spoken: The Vistani
Derived From: This is a crazy-quilt language which borrows from virtually every other language in the demiplane.

### Pharazian
Spoken: Pharazia.
Derived From: Various Arabic tongues.

### Sithican
Spoken: Sithicus. A dialect may also be spoken in Ghastria. A dialect is also spoken in Liffe.
Derived From: The Elven languages of Ansalon, most likely. Although probably closest to Silvanesti, it is also probably a pidgin tongue mixing in elements of Qualinesti and perhaps even some Solamnic as well. The elves of Sithicus and the Falkovnians may share a handful of words in common with each other, which probably pleases neither group.

### Tepestani
Spoken: Tepest
Derived From: Some sort of Gaelic tongue.

### Thayvian
Spoken: Hazlan, dialects spoken in Nova Vaasa, Valachan
Derived From: The most obvious guess is the native tongue of Hazlik's homeland, Thay. However, other lords speak it who came from Cormyr and Vaasa. These lands have native languages totally dissimilar to Thayvian. So, my preference is that these domains actually all speak varying dialects of Faerûn's Common.

### Vos
Spoken: Vorostokov
Derived From: Vos is a language spoken in Cerilia. The spoken language sounds much like Russian. Other than some runic symbols, Vos has no written language. Since a few people in Vorostokov can read and write, they probably use an imported language for this purpose. Be that language something like Brecht (from Cerilia) or Balok is a matter of personal preference. The Vos dislike written languages, considering them to have evil supernatural significance. Thus, the written language used by a handful of people in Vorostokov probably did come in from somewhere else in the demiplane.

Also:

*Bluetspur*
The illithids communicate via telepathy. Some of their slaves may speak Balok, Thayvian, or Thaani, a language otherwise spoken only by some of the population of Immol in Barovia.

*Burning Peaks*
Although not named, the natives of the Burning Peaks cluster speak a language supposedly taken from Oerth's prehistory. This language is completely foreign to any other tongue now spoken on Oerth or in Ravenloft.

Any domains not mentioned likely have a language unique to that domain. There are a few racial languages as well, which I haven't bothered to list.

## Overcoming the Linguistic Barrier in Ravenloft

In the core, there are really only three languages the party will need to know. Balok is spoken throughout most of the Balinoks region and the in the southwest, it would be safe to assume that no matter where you go, someone's going to speak it.

Mordentish is spoken in most of the northwestern domains, and is taught in Darkon's schools. It should be a safe assumption that this language is spoken by most scholars in the Core.

The third language is basically Faerunian common, spoken in Kartakass and the southeast. There's also a growing population of humans who speak the Kartakan dialect in Sithicus as well. Although there isn't much sign that this language has bled into other domains, the reverse is probably true; as mentioned, you'll be able to find someone who speaks Balok or Mordentish. In the Islands, language may become more of a barrier. However, in most of these places heroes should at least be able to hire a translator, as in *Touch of Death*.

Here's a bit of language trivia for you: in all likelihood, someone who speaks Falkovnian might be able to pick out a word or two of Sithican, and vice versa; Falkovnian is probably actually Thenolian, while the elves of Sithicus likely speak some dialect of Silvanesti, or maybe even the Elvish Ancient tongue which eventually became the modern elven languages of Krynn. In Taladas, these languages have influenced each other to a small degree, and the two tongues probably have 10%-30% in common with each other. (I'm sure this would come as quite a shock to both the human-despising Sithicans and the elf-enslaving Falkovnians!)

It's obviously the job of the players to make sure their characters can speak with each other when they first make their PCs, but obviously you're going to hit some point when the PCs don't speak a word of the local language. I encountered this situation in my campaign, and cobbled together some rules on learning languages from various AD&D sources:

To use this system, the character must be totally immersed in the new language. Any day the PC mainly uses his own languages does not count towards the PC learning the new language.

To learn a new language through total immersion takes 20 months, minus the character's Intelligence. The PC in question had an 18 Int, so (had the campaign not ended), he would have learned Mordentish in just 2 months.

That's the basic rule. If you want to do a little math, you can add a little more detail. Obviously, the PC doesn't just wake up one morning perfectly fluent in the new language; they learn it gradually. Consider each month to be 30 days, then figure out how many days it will take the character to learn the language. Divide this number by ten (there's the math); this is how many days it takes the character to become 10% more fluent in the new language. As they gain fluency, they get a better grasp of the tongue. Here's some guidelines:

10%: The character recognizes a word here or there, but to communicate they'll have to rely on a lot of (to quote Time of the Dragon) "hand waving and bad mime." I pondered allowing the character a list of 10 words they could use correctly. Anything else would have to rely on charades, and "bad mime."

20%: Let the player add another 20 words to his list.

30%: The character can get across basic concepts, but needs to make extensive use of gestures to make themselves clear.

50%: The character can communicate moderately well, but may occasionally have to resort to "pantomime and long-winded explanations using simple concepts." (Quoting Time of the Dragon again.)

70%: The character can participate in conversations, but he may speak a bit slowly (and ask the same of others around him) as he thinks of the words he needs to use. The character probably does understand many figures of speech.

80%: The character has a pretty good grasp of the language, but once in a while they may have to pause to think of a term.

90%: He can get along perfectly well in the new tongue, although he may occasionally slip up when using plurals or tense.

100%: Fluency. The character probably still has a noticable accent, however.

Using this system, I'd also say that the character doesn't need to spend a proficiency slot to gain the language.

# Ravenloft Pronunciation Guide

**By J.W. Mangrum**

Arak (AH ruk)
Arkandale (AR kun dale)
Barovia (bah RO vee ah)
Bluetspur (BLOOT spoor)
Borca (BOR kah)
Darkon (DAR kon)
Dementlieu (DEH mon lyoo)
Dorvinia (dor VEE nee ah)
Falkovnia (fol KOV nee ah)
Farelle (fuh REL)
Forlorn (for LORN)
G'Henna (ga HEN a)
Gundarak (goon DAR uk)
Har'Akir (hara KIR)
Hazlan (HAZ lun)
Invidia (in VEE dia)
Kartakass (KAR ta kus)
Keening (KEEN ing)
Lamordia (luh MOR dee ah)
Markovia (mar KO vee ah)
Mordent (MOR dent)
Nova Vaasa (Nova VAH sah)
Richemulot (REESH mu lo)
Sanguinia (sahn GWIN eeah)
Sithicus (SITH i kus)
Souragne (soo RAW nya)
Sri Raji (sree RA jee)
Tepest (TE pest)
Valachan (VAL ah kon)
Vechor (VE kor)
Verbrek (ver BREK)
Zherisia (zehr ISS eeah)

John W. Mangrum (JON DUH ba yuh MAN grum)

# Ravenloft Lyrics

**By the List**

Below is a collection of several quotes from famous and not so famous real world songs. This compilation has been created with the intention of helping DMs and players alike to better define the way they see each of the most famous RL characters, to characterize them through significative lyrics that may evoke the characters' deeper feelings, thoughts and fears. Finally, this is also a good source of music to listen to, so enjoy!

Note: each entry lists first RL character to which it's attributed to, then the lyrics follow. The name of the group or singer, and the title of the song from which the quote has been taken are the at the end.

### Dominiani to one of his patients:

"Madness comes and madness goes
An insane place, with insane moves
Battles without, for battles within
Where evil lives and evil rules... "

(Megadeth,  *Captive Honor*)


### Drakov during one of his speeches to the troops:

"Great nations built from the bones of the dead,
With mud and straw, blood and sweat,
You know your worth when your enemies
Praise your architecture of aggression."

(Megadeth,  *Architecture of Aggression*)


### Another of Drakov's famous speeches before the last campaign against Darkon:

"Melting down all metals, turning plows and shears to swords,
Shun words of the Bible, we need implements of war.
Chalklines and red puddles of those who have been slain
Destiny, that crooked schemer, says the dead shall rise again. "

(Megadeth,  *Ashes In Your Mouth*)


### Gondegal to the people of Falkovnia:

"Hide in the shadows
Awaiting defeat
Or live by the sword
And choose to be free "

(Megadet, *Disintegrators*)


**Carnival Song written as a warning to "heroes":**

"Hey Mr. Hero
Walking a thin fine line,
Under the microscope of life.
Remember your roots my friend,
They're right down below,
'Cause heroes come and heroes go."

(Creed, *Are You Ready?*)


**What Adam told Eva in a quiet moment:**

"I'd love to take you home with me and tuck you into bed
I'd love to see what makes you tick inside your pretty head
I wish that I could keep you in a precious Chinese box
On Sundays I would pray for you, so it would never stop
I'd love to hear you laugh tonight, I'd love to hear you weep
I'd love to listen to you while you're screaming in your sleep
I'd love to soothe you with my voice and take your hand in mine
I'd love to take you past the stars and out of reach of time
I'd love to see inside your mind, to tear it all apart
To cut you open with a knife and find your sacred heart
I'd love to take your satin dolls and tear them all to shreds
I'd love to mess your pretty hair, I'd love to see you dead."

(Oingo Boingo, *Insanity*)


**Anton Misroi to Chicken Bone:**

"In the dark of the night I was tossing and turning,
And the nightmare I had was as bad as can be;
It scared me out of my wits,
A corpse falling to bits,
Then I opened my eyes and the nightmare was _me!_"

(from the musical *Anastasia*)


**Merilee's thoughts in the Garden:**

"Dark earth all around, trapped here underground
All I do is wait, and I hate how the world
Keeps turning so slow
And I can't grow.
"What would it be like to be grown?

Would I wish for these days in this darkness alone?
Is there a reason I missed my season?
I don't know...will I ever grow?"

(In the Garden,   from *Ravenloft The Musical* - by Leyshon Campbell)


*George Weathermay to Natalia Vorishkova in his final confrontation:*

"I used to dream about love,
But that was a long time ago.
I was one of the ones who believed your lies,
But now your true colors show.
So we stand upon the grave
Of the promises we made
With nowhere else to hide
And no more alibis.
"Sharp teeth bite deep.
Better not turn your back.
Too much bad blood.
Remember to cover your tracks."

(Starship,   *Love Among the Cannibals*)


*The late Rudolph van Richten (or any arcanist):*

"Illumination comes so hard,
makes me see but it leaves scar,
I often wish that I didn't know
what I know now."

(Rollins Band,   *Illumination*)


*For the Gentlemen Caller:*

"I'll come to you like an affliction,
then I'll leave you like an addiction.
You'll never forget me.
Want to know why?"

(Rollins Band,   *Liar*)


*Adam to himself or any of his captives:*

"I hate the world that I think hates me.
Punch holes in the wall, you know that hurts me,

I feel dark and cold and alone, it burns me.
Wish someone would come and touch me."

(Rollins Band,  *Lonely*)


### Vecna to pretty much anyone:

"Do you really want to confront me?
Do you really want to deal with me?
Huh? Huh? Huh?
NO!
I really don't think so."

(Rollins Band,  *Step Back*)


### Strahd pursuing Tatyana:

"All I want
is the world I think I've found,
When I look into your eyes.
All I know is that I'm tired
of the world around me.
Please,
Don't ignore me."

(Rollins Band,  *All I Want*)


### For Abd-al-Mamat:

"Hey, Hey, Hey,
I'm guilty.
And you're guilty too."

(Gravity Kills,  *Guilty*)


### Strahd Von Zarovich at the moment of his fall:

"Venomous voice, tempts me,
Drains me, bleeds me,
Leaves me cracked and empty.
Drags me down like some sweet gravity.
"The snake behind me hisses
What my damage could have been.
My blood before me begs me
Open up my heart again."

(Last Warlock)

***Gentleman Caller to Isolde:***

"Comin' Down, the world turned over,
Angels fall without you there,
And I go on as you get colder,
Or are you someone's prayer?"

(Black Balloon,   *GooGoo Dolls*)


***The Late Rudolph van Richten to the Weatermay twins:***

"I need to know,
The nature of the demons that possess man's soul,
I need to know,
Why man's content to let them make him less than whole."

(I Need To Know,   from the musical *Jekyll and Hyde*)


***Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth:***

"The world has gone insane,
And parasites are eating at your brain,
And nothing is the way it was before,
A pack of wolves is howling at your door.
Your living in a non-stop nightmare,
dead men's dreams,
filled with screaming pain!
Hulring you to mad extremes in a world that's gone insane.
The world has lost its head, and every evil hour is filled with dread.
Your flaoting on a lake, but upside down!
And when you try to breath, you start to drown.
You cannot speak as nameless ghosts and faceless ghouls, beg you join the dead. No one tells
these grousome fools that the world has lost its head!
Fiendish creatures leave their graves haunt you,
Old friends risen from the dead to taunt you,
God forsaken images that daunt you,
Drowning in an endless flood of blood.
The world has lost its mind, and everywhere you turn you fear you'll find, some nightmare even
worse than those you see,
Satanic demons closing on me.
How can it be that even though they see you plight, everyone is blind,
night is day and day is night in a world that lost its mind.
The world has gone beserk,
And hiding in the murk, new mosnters lurk,
You see a sea of snakes upon the floor,
You see the reaper grinning at your door,
You scream in silence! Bad is good and good is bad,

Sacred is profane.
And its wiser to be mad, in a world that's gone insane."

(The World Has Gone Insane,   from the musical *Jekyll and Hyde*, with a few inverted lines)


### *Alfred Timothy:*

"What is this feeling of power and drive,
I've never known
I feel alive!
Were does this feeling of power derive,
Making me know why I'm alive.
Like the moon an enigma,
Lost and alone in the night,
Damned by some heavenly stigma,
But blazing with LIGHT!
Animals trapped behind bars in the zoo,
Need to run rampant and free,
Predators live by the prey they pursue,
This time the predators ME!"

(Alive,   from the musical *Jekyll and Hyde*)


### *The Timothy Family's Ballad:*

" Out from the new day's mist I run
Out from the new day's mist I come
" I hunt therefore I am
harvester land
taking the fallen lamb
" Out from the new day's mist I run
Out from the new day's mist I have come
" We shift pulsing with the earth
company we keep
roaming the land while you sleep"

(Metallica,   *Of Man and Wolf*)


### *Strahd to Tatyana (or re-incarnation there of):*

"Your aztec eyes, egyptian hair
your beauty bestowed upon my lair
I've loved you before, in other lives
but you've never meant as much to me
never meant as much to me as now"

(The Offspring,   *Demons*)

*Little Luc Tarascon's mad ravings before the final assault on the cemetery of Marais d'Tarascon:*

"The locusts are singing
The sun is red
It's gotten so late somehow
Theres gonna be trouble
You know what they said
We should have been home by now
We should have been home by now
The thunder is rolling
The sky is black
It's gotten so dark somehow
There's gonna be danger
God, I wish we were back
We should have been home by now
We should have been home by now"

(Meatloaf,  *Home By Now/No Matter What*)


*Lemot Sediam Juste's introductive speech for his visitors:*

"The Lights come on
The set is down
The curtain's flown away
To all you creatures of the night
I say it's time we play
" We'll show you things
that in your life
You'd never dreamed you'd know
So now before the ghosts arrive
It's welcome to the show!"

(Savatage,  *Welcome*)


*An old campfire song of Sebua, "Tiyet's Heart":*

"For all those moments of yesterday
She's traded every tomorrow
And now all those moments are so far away
Ghosts haunt each word she would say
As she walks among the decay."

(Savatage,  *Turns to me*)


*Capt. Garvyn of the Endurance in a conversation with his first mate, Brummett:*

"I believe what the prophets said
That the oceans hold their dead
But at night when the waves are near
They whisper and I hear..."

(Savatage,   *The Wake of Magellan*)


***The late Rudolph van Richten to a group of adventurers:***

"There are wounds that bleed inside us
There are wounds we never see
They are part of our refinements
That allow a man to be."

(Savatage,   *The Wake of Magellan*)


***Ankthepoth's last prayer before his mortal body crumbled to dust:***

"Everything I ever had for one more tomorrow
Everything I ever had for just one more night
And if this is not to be I pray could I borrow
Just another final hour onto my life."

(Savatage,   *The Hourglass*)

# The Feast Of Goblyns · Bleak House Connection

**By J.W. Mangrum**

**Feast of Goblyns:**

Run it as written. Leave Daclaud Heinfroth a normal vampire with a few salient abilities, as he's described. Resist the temptation to use his updated stats as presented in Bleak House.

OK. Now, here's the kicker: kill him. Let the players kill him; you might even want to make sure they do. Let the players stake him, burn him, whatever they want to do. FoG ends, and the PCs go on their merry way.

Along comes the Gentleman Caller to the Dark Keep, looking ahead as always. The Caller brings Heinfroth back from oblivion. We know he can do it, the Caller brings back Metus, who has been dust for decades. The Caller also decides to have some fun, and brings Daclaud back as a cerebral vampire, which as you know has quite a few differences from the standard.

Now, history resumes its normal course (if you're following the canon history). Daclaud, now freed from Gundar's control masterminds the latter's execution. Daclaud becomes the lord of Gundarak, doesn't deserve it, ends up lord of Dominia. (We all know this part.)

*Tip:* in the meantime, make sure the player encounter at least one asylum that <u>isn't</u> run by evil fiends. You don't want them to automatically associate "asylum" with "enemy."

**Bleak House:**

It's entirely possible that the PCs won't know exactly who runs the asylum until they meet him. Everyone on the ship can easily feign ignorance, and the asylum interns will certainly be less than chatty.

They go into a large room with a picture to meet the head of the asylum. He's peering outside from behind a thick, closed curtain. He turns: it's Daclaud! Before they can act, he throws open

the curtain, and sunlight floods the room. Daclaud stands bathed in the sunlight, unharmed. How can this be? Here's Daclaud's explanation: during the matter with the Crown of Souls, Daclaud knew he was playing a very dangerous game, and took measures to protect himself. One of these was a sort of contingency spell: if he was destroyed, he would rise again. What he didn't count on was, when he was Raised, he found himself human again, blessedly free of the curse of undeath. He owes the heroes his life in a very literal sense.

Seeing a foe they damn well know they killed right before them, obviously unharmed by something that would have destroyed him last time: the players may just buy it. After that, business as normal.

John W. Mangrum

# The Forbidden Names

**Compiled by Jack the Reaper**

**VAMPIRE:**
Czech - Upir (oo-PEER), Upiri (oo-PEE-ri)
Filipino - Bampira (bam-PEE-rah)
French - Vampire (vahn-PEER), Vampires
German - Vampir (vam-PEER), Vampireh (vam-PEE-reh)
Hebrew - Arpad (ar-PAD), Arpadim (ar-pa-DEEM)
Italian - Vampiro (vam-PEE-ro), Vampiri (vam-PEE-ree)
Portuguese/Spanish - Vampiro (vam-PEE-ro), Vampiros (vam-PEE-ros)
Norwegian - Vampyr
Russian - Vampir (vam-PEER), Vampiry (vam-PEE-ry)

**GHOST:**
Czech - Duch (DUCH), Duchove (DUCH-ove)
Euzkara - Mamua, Mamuak
Filipino - Multo (mool-TWO)
French - Fantome (fhan-TOME), Fantomes
German - Geist (GAIST), Geister (GAI-ster)
Hebrew - Rooach (ROO-ahh), Roochot (roo-HOT)
Italian - Fantasma (fun-TAHS-mah), Fantasmi (fun-TAHS-mee)
Portuguese/Spanish - Fantasma (fan-TAZ-mah), Fantasmas (fan-TAZ-mahs)
Norwegian - Spoekelse
Russian - Prividenye (pri-vee-DAEN-ye), Prividenya (pri-vee-DAEN-ya); Duh; Prizrak

**LICH:**
Cantonese - Gudai (GOO-dai)
Czech - Kostej Nesmrtleny (KOS-tej NEH-smr-TEL-nee), Kostejove Nesmrtelni
Euzkara - Gorpu, Gorpuak
German - Leichnam, Leichnameh
Hebrew - Peger (PEH-ger), Pgarim (peh-gah-REEM)
Russian - Koshei (kah-SHEY)

**WEREWOLF:**
Cantonese - Langren
Czech - Vlkodlak (vl-KO-dlak), Vlkodlaci (vl-ko-DLA-kee)
Euzkara - Gizonotso, Gizonotsonak
French - Loup-Garou (LOO-gah-ROO), Loups-Garous
German - Werwolf (ver-WOH-lf), Werewoelfe
Hebrew - Adam-Ze'ev (ah-DAM zeh-EV), Anshei-Ze'ev (an-SHEIGH zeh-EV)
Italian - Lupo Mannaro (LOO-poh mahn-NAH-ro), Lupi Mannari (LOO-pee mahn-NAH-ree)
Latin - Homolupus, Homolupi
Norwegian - Valruv (VAHL-roov)
Portuguese - Lobisomem (lo-bee-ZOH-may), Lobisomens (loo-bee-ZOH-mays)

Russian - Oboroten (OB-ah-rah-tin), Oborotni (OB-ah-rah-tnee); Volkolak (val-kah-LAK), Volkolaki (val-kah-LAH-kee)
Spanish - Hombre Lobo, Hombres Lobo

**FIEND:**
Czech - Demon, Demoni
Euzkara - Debaru, Debaruak
French - Demon (deh-MON), Demons
Hebrew - Shed, Shedim
Italian - Demone (DEH-mo-neh), Demoni
Norwegian - Djevel
Russian - Chort, Cherti; Dyavol
Spanish/Portuguese - Demonio, Demonios

**GYPSY:**
Czech - Cikan (ci-KAHN), Cikani (ci-KAH-nee)
Euzkara - Ijito, Ijitoak
French - Gitan (jee-TAHN), Gitans
Hebrew - Tzoani (tso-ah-NEE), Tzoanim
Italian - Zingaro (TZINE-gah-roh), Zingari; Gitano, Gitani
Norwegian - Sigoeyner
Portuguese - Cigano (see-GUH-noo), Ciganos
Russian - Tzigan (tzee-GUN), Tziganee (tzee-GAH-nee)
Spanish - Gitano, Gitanos

**WITCH:**
Czech - Carodejnice (cha-ro-DEJ-nees)
French - Sorciere (sor-si-YERE), Sorcieres
Euzkara - Sorgin, Sorginak
Filipino - Bruha (BROO-hah)
German - Hexe (HEX-eh), Hexen (HEXN)
Hebrew - Mechashefa (mae-CHA-shae-FAH), Mechashefot
Italian - Strega (STREH-gah), Streghe (STREH-gheh)
Norwegian - Heks
Portuguese - Bruxa (BROO-shuh), Bruxas
Russian - Koldun (kal-DOON), kolduny (kal-doo-NY); Vedma (VED-mah), Vedmee (VED-my)
Spanish - Bruja, Brujas

**SKELETON:**
Czech - Kostlivec (KO-stli-vec), Kostlivci
French - Squellete (skeu-LET), Squelletes
Filipino - Buto-Buto (BOO-toh BOO-toh)
German - Skelett, Skeletteh
Hebrew - Sheled (SHEH-led), Shladim (sheh-lah-DEEM)
Italian - Scheletro (SKEH-let-roh), Scheletri
Norwegian - Skjelett

Russian - Skelet, Skelety
Spanish/Portuguese - Esqueleto, Esqueletos

**GHOUL:**
Czech - Ghul (GHOOL), Ghulove (ghoo-LOV)
French - Goule (GOOL), Goules
Hebrew - Goual (GOU-al), Goualim
Russian - Vurdalak (voor-da-LAK), Vurdalaki

**SHADOW:**
Czech - Stin (STEEN), Stiny
Euzkara - Itzal, Itzalak
French - Ombre, Ombres
German - Schatten, Schatten
Hebrew - Tzel, Tzelalim
Italian - Ombra (OHM-brah), Ombre (OHM-breh)
Norwegian - Skygge
Russian - Ten, Tenee
Spanish/Portuguese - Sombra, Sombras

**UNDEAD:**
Czech - Nemrtvy (ne-MRT-vee), Nemrtvi (ne-MRT-vi)
French - Mort-Vivant (mor-vee-VAHN), Morts-Vivants
German - Untoter, Untoteh
Hebrew - Al-Met (AHL-MET), Al-Metim (AHL-meh-TEAM)
Italian - Non-Morto (nohn-MOHR-toh), Non-Morti (nohn-MOHR-tee)
Russian - Mertvak (meert-VAK), Mertvaki (meert-vah-KEE)

**RAVEN:**
Czech - Havran (HAV-ran), Havrani (HAV-ra-ni)
French - Corbeau (KHOR-bo), Corbeaux
German - Rabe, Raben
Hebrew - Orev (oh-REV), Orvim (or-VIM)
Italian - Corvo (COHR-voh), Corvi (COHR-vee)
Russian - Voron (VOH-rahn), Vorony (VOH-rah-ny)

**MONSTER:**
Czech - Netvor (neh-TVOR), Netvori (ne-TVO-ri)
French - Monstre (MOUN-ss-treh), Monstres
Hebrew - Mifletzet (meef-LEH-tzet), Miflatzot (meef-lah-TZOT)
Italian - Mostro (MOHS-troh), Mostri (MOHS-tree)
Russian - Chudovishe (choo-DOH-vee-sheh), Chudovisha (choo-DOH-vee-shah)

# The House On Gryphon Hill Revamped

**by J.W. Mangrum**

## Introduction:

The living and undead Strahds tell their own version of the setup in The Alchemist's Tale and The Creature's Tale, respectively. In short, both claim that they are the real Strahd, and that the other is just some sort of mystical construct (created by the Apparatus).

The body of this adventure takes place in the fall of 579 by the Barovian Calendar, nearly two hundred years earlier than the typical start dates of most Ravenloft campaigns. This could make fitting this adventure into an existing campaign a bit tricky. Fortunately, the adventure lends itself to fixing this problem. To explain how to adapt this adventure, one must first know the events which lead up to it. The Alchemist's Tale and The Creature's Tale both explain this, but both views are biased. In seeking the truth of the matter, let us turn to a third party.

In the adventure, Azalin makes his first printed appearance as the Creature Strahd's henchman. He's not central to the plot, but with the RL setting, Azalin became a much more powerful, interesting fellow. Seems a shame to have the PCs interacting with a pre-Darkon Azalin and not give him more to do, so let's give him his own version of events. Condense the following to a page, and you have The Servant's Tale.

## Azalin's Tale:

In 579, Azalin had been serving under Strahd's yoke for decades, assigned to find a means of escape. Over all those years, half a man's lifetime, the lich studied the nature of his prison, examining the very fabric of the Demiplane of Dread. It could be said that Azalin understood more about the mysterious Mists than any man before or since.

After decades of frustration, Azalin's sorcerous research finally seemed to bear fruit. Magically reaching through the Mists, Azalin was able to detect another world. Azalin sensed this world as a drowned sailor sees the sun: distant, dim, and distorted. But it was there, and with time Azalin

was able to develop new rites and strengthen this connection. With Strahd looking over his shoulder, Azalin developed the powerful magics needed to pierce the grasping Mists, to bring Barovia and this mysterious new world into conjunction and thus open a portal to their freedom. By autumn, all was ready. Azalin and Strahd, Barovia's two darkest figures, opened a passageway into the new world and, accompanied by a force of Strahd's undead minions, stepped through to freedom. They found themselves by a seaside village. The storm raging above announced their coming by tripling its force; moments after the twosome appeared on the scene, lightning destroyed the village's venerable chapel. Strahd and Azalin found themselves drawn to Gryphon Hill, and there the Alchemist and the Creature met each other, flip sides of the same dark coin. The Alchemist and his fiancée were sent screaming into the night.

The Creature Strahd immediately set about strengthening his power base in these new lands, unable to accept the existence of his fair doppleganger. In the countryside outside the village, the vampire Strahd quickly discovered and recruited a clan of werewolves, the Timothys. Meanwhile, Azalin withdrew to the Weathermay mausoleum to determine exactly where he and the Creature had found themselves.

But their freedom was an illusion. Azalin had been able to bring the village of Mordentshire into alignment with Barovia, but he and Strahd had not found escape. Instead, the Dark Powers had been able to sense and intrude as Azalin had reached out for the Alchemist and his dire Apparatus. In the same moment the portal opened, the Alchemist used his machine to tear the evil from his soul and fling it into the cosmos.

This threw the demiplane into chaos. Mordent appeared as a quasi-domain (just a way to describe this, I'm not coining a new term), unnaturally grafted onto Barovia. In a sense, the Dark Powers were literally forced to form the land from the mists, and it is as unstable as their rage. The Apparatus experiment simply strengthened the ancient bond between the Alchemist and the vampire Strahd, and von Zarovich became the temporary darklord of this unstable, shifting addition to his domain.

Azalin found much of this unexpected and unwelcome, and studied the situation. In stolen glances at Strahd's journals, Azalin had read of the vampire lord's last long-staying "guest", an elven vampire who had a strange tale to tell concerning Strahd's lost love, Tatyana. According to the elf, at the moment Tatyana flung herself from the castle, some part of her had sought to escape Barovia so desperately that it was able to find physical form on a distant world. This shred of a soul was able to find life, separate yet forever tied to the lands of mist.

Azalin had no doubt that the creation of Barovia had been a singular event; who could say what eldritch debris it had scattered across the worlds? In the moment that Strahd von Zarovich's humanity was stripped away to be replaced by eternal undeath, was it impossible that this life-force might not be reborn somewhere, somewhen else? Strahd and Azalin finally escape Barovia, and waiting for them they find another Strahd, with another face, another life. The two Strahds had reached out to each other, and met somewhere in the middle, a shifting land of mists and madness. As the two Strahds battled each other, the Powers roiled the storm above, roaring their outrage!

**DM Notes:**
The DM has some options when running this adventure. If the players enjoy stand-alone adventures, the DM can use the pregenerated characters provided. These adventurers come from the Prime Material Mordentshire, unlucky enough to have come to the damned village on the same day Strahd and Azalin arrive.

Dungeon Masters interested in more of a challenge can still bring in PCs from contemporary Ravenloft campaigns. In this scenario, the PCs arrive in modern Mordentshire, only to succumb to a strange illness. After a night of listening to Mordentish yarns, the heroes awake to find themselves in a strange, altered village, and are told they are suffering from fever. Have the PCs gone mad? Are they in an alternate world? Have they really slid back in time? Will the nightmare ever end?

**Prologue:**

The adventure begins with the PCs arriving in modern-day Mordentshire. This can be used with either the players' PCs or the pregenerated PCs. The party is in the Greatroom of the Blackard Inn, the village's largest, which largely caters to well-to-do travelers such as merchants.

The PCs and a handful of other patrons have sought refuge from a storm rumbling outside. The PCs, having just arrived in town, got caught in the storm and are soaked to the bone.

*The mood is set by the storm outside. The patrons eat their meals in silence, listening to the patter of rain on the windows, the ticking of a grandfather clock in the corner, and the crackling of the fire blazing in the hearth. The innkeep, a wiry man who seems to dislike your "rough ilk", freshens the drinks of two men sitting together. From their dress, you'd guess they're merchants; from the accents of their mumbled conversation, you'd say they hail from Dementlieu.*

*As the innkeep turns from the men, one of them puts up a hand, and asks, a bit too loudly, "What's all this we've been hearing about ghosts?"*

*The innkeep and the few local patrons stiffen. It seems that even the fire ceases to crackle, the clock to miss a tick. The Dementlieu merchant looks about nervously, stammering, "It's just... we heard there was a haunted house in this town..."*

*An older man, a local, rises from his seat by the fire, his back to the two men. "The House!" he barks, in a whiskeyed voice. Lightning flashes. Slowly, with practiced drama, the local turns and walks into the center of the room, the fire throwing his dancing shadow on the two merchants. "You want to know about the House on Gryphon Hill!" Thunder rumbles. The man points a callused finger at the two anxious men. The old man squints at you and takes a step towards your group, addressing the whole room.*

*"That House is a whirlpool. It draws all the evil of the land towards it, and sucks it in. 'Tis a dark and foul House, with a dark and foul history. And of all the foul days that House has seen, I'll tell you the foulest of them all!" ...*

If the pregenerated PCs are being used, the rest of the adventure can now be played. In essence, the DM and players will be working together to create the folktale the storyteller delivers. If the players' own PCs are being used, the story suffers a rude interruption; they succumb to a fever vision (Event #1 in the adventure). When next they wake, three days have past. Speaking of the past, it is now actually the year 579 (although the locals call it 1253). Everyone around them

insists that the PCs' backgrounds are those of the pregenerated PCs in the adventure. In other words: although the PCs may realize they've somehow been drawn to this time, everyone else believes that the PCs have simply succumbed to the strange fever which has been affecting quite a few of the townsfolk. (This is actually a manifestation of the Dark Powers' manic outrage, not unlike the broiling clouds above.)

Instead of letting the players think they've moved through time à la *From the Shadows* or *Castles Forlorn*, it should be played that the PCs may indeed be suffering from the ravages of a brain-fever. The adventure make use of periods of delerium, when the PCs slip towards madness and suffer short hallucinations. I added "Moments of Clarity," five times in the adventure when the PCs should suffer the physical effects of delerium (weak at the knee, etc.), but suddenly (and momentarily) find themselves back in modern Mordentshire, where it appears that they have been wandering about town in a state of dementia.

Anyway, the adventure can go a number of ways, determined by the Mesmerist's reading. The body of the adventure doesn't have to be changed. The PCs should also slowly glean that they may be stuck in this time/demented state until they can restore order and soothe the DP (not that they'd know they have to soothe the DP; they'll just think of it as having to kill the vampire).

**Wrapping Up:**
By the time the PCs would face Azalin, he's figured out what's going on and isn't at all happy. In a very real sense, he feels he's leapt from the frying pan into the fire. Although he still gives lip service to Strahd's orders, Azalin is completely fed up with the vampire and is far more interested in getting out of the situation intact. He isn't even particularly interested in stopping the PCs. If powerful and crafty PCs battle him, it's just barely possible they can destroy him, but Azalin has hidden his phylactery (still a golden child's skull) well outside of town with a spare corpse. If Azalin is defeated, he will immediately flee to the devil he knows, Barovia. Even if the PCs don't defeat him, Azalin still decides to make a retreat by the time of the climax.

In the climax, the Alchemist and the Creature, locked in a struggle, fall from the cliffs into the sea. The Alchemist is killed, although it isn't impossible that, like Tatyana, some version of him

could return one day to torment Strahd yet again. Strahd is gravely wounded by the crashing seas (running water), but his contingency spell instantly zaps him to a safe haven in Barovia. The situation resolved and everyone back where they belong, Mordent becomes a domain. A haunt named Willfred Godefroy, whom we all know, is made the lord in the power vacuum left by Strahd and Azalin's passing.

**Note On Gryphon Manor:**

At the end of the adventure, Gryphon Manor is burned down. Since this isn't crucial to the plot, it's easy to deal with, and gives us a new angle to play with: the connection between Godefroy and Gryphon Hill. At the time of the adventure, Gryphon Manor is 400 years old (much older than most of the rest of the village), having originally been built by an adventurer named Renier (no relation to the wererats, I presume). Ever since its construction, the Manor has been thick with unseen evil. No one knows how, or why, but it has a subtle and malign effect on all who dwell in it. Instead of thinking of the Manor as a being in of itself, ala The Haunting/The House of Lament, think of it as a nexus for evil, a place with madness fairly well mixed into its mortar (think of the hotel in the Shining). This "nexus" became more powerful after Mordent entered the demiplane, and the evil in the very stones now actually gives the Manor strength.

Every undead spirit in the domain can feel the Manor's subtle pull. (This would include *Requiem* PCs, and might make Mordent an interesting place for a *Requiem* adventure.) At the borders, this pull can only barely be felt, but with each step toward the house, the pull becomes stronger and stronger. By the time a spirit can actually see the Manor, it may not have the strength to turn back. Inside the Manor, a visitor who could see the invisible would see supposedly empty halls filled with flittering spirits doing pressing back into the corners, doing their best to hide from the harsh master of the house, Godefroy.

Anyway, the Dark Powers have bonded Godefroy and the Manor. So long as Godefroy's spirit roams the Manor's halls, the Manor is highly resistant to anything more than cosmetic damage (and Godefroy is always trying to get his near-mindless minions to make repairs on the manor). So long as the Manor stands, Godefroy's sprit will always reform if destroyed.

**Aftermath:**

Strahd is left in a deep slumber deep beneath Castle Ravenloft, recovering from his wounds. By the time he wakes, he can remember the events in Mordent only vaguely.

Godefroy becomes the Lord of Mordent.

Azalin is left unsupervised in his ruined manor outside Vallaki to ponder what went wrong. After at least a month of contemplation, Azalin decides his theories are valid; he possesses the power to escape Ravenloft, but the execution was imperfect. The forces which drew Strahd and himself here are still watching, and involving their favorite pet, Strahd, in the plans simply guaranteed that they would interfere. In fact, when next Azalin conducts the rites, some way must be found to guarantee that the Dark Powers are... distracted...

Azalin also examines the aftermath of events in Mordent, and realizes that just about anyone may be granted a domain by the mists. Azalin comes to a decision. He will enter the mists, and be granted his own domain. Azalin knows this will come with a price, but he is confident that with his formidable powers he can withstand any punishment the DP seek to inflict, and this would at last lift Strahd's yoke from his shoulders. Once in his new land, he would continue to perfect his rites, creating the sorcery necessary to tear the demiplane apart.

However, he still needs a way to distract the Dark Powers, a daunting task at the least. Hmm... maybe that travelling doom prophet Hyskosa knows something...

Of course, once Lord of Darkon, Azalin found his memory of the events surrounding Mordent blurred. No matter, he can just re-invent the rites... It seems the Dark Powers don't want Azalin to relearn that magic. Or any magic. Azalin found himself unable to perfect the rites, horrendously shackled by his darklord's curse, trapped into waiting for Hyskosa's Hexad to come to pass so he could grab his one chance at escape...

John W. Mangrum

# The Lycampire Issue

**by R. Sweeney**

If an undead (say, a vampire) is attacked by a werewolf, will the undead become an undead werewolf?
And what if a werewolf is drained by a vampire?

### Option 1:

Lycanthropy is a curse of the living. The curse has no effect upon the dead or undead. Thus the vampire is a regular vampire.

### Option 2:

Werecreatures are not subject to becoming vampire. Some stories indicate that a lycanthrope's blood is tained, and a vampire can't feed upon it. Thus one could argue that the vampire cannot transform the slain werewolf.

### Option 3:

Vampires can only create vampires of their racial stock. A vampire cannot drain a wolf dead and have a vampire-wolf, thus he cannot transform a werewolf into a vampire.

### Option 4:

Both curses are cumulative. The new form shares all the strenghts and weaknesses of both curses (weaknesses taking precidence over strengths.) The resulting were-vamp can be attacked with silver weapons or +2 or greater magically enchanted weapons or a stake made of wood from an ash tree.

### Option 5:

A normal vampire is created, but it has unique attributes that indicate it's werefolf past.

Robert Sweeney

# Tovag And Cavitius:
# A Ravenloft Middle Earth
**By C.D. Nichols**

Just recently, I've noticed an odd parrellel between the Burning Peaks cluster and a classic of fantasy literature. The work I refer to is, of course, The Lord of the Rings.
"What?" I hear you cry. "He is mad I tell you! All that time skulking in the tunnels beneath the bookshop has unhinged his mind."

Oh no, my friends. I'm perfectly rational. Let us look at the parellels, one by one...

### Cavitius
A hostile wasteland of ashen deserts inhabited by undead, ruled by an evil demi-god.
Surrounded by volcanic peaks.

### Mordor
A hostile wasteland of dusty deserts inhabited by orcs, ruled by an evil god-like being. Surrounded by volcanic peaks.

### Citadel Cavitius
A dark fortress city, seat of Vecna's power.

### Minas Mogul (or Cirith Ungol)
A dark fortress city, seat of Sauron's power.

### Vecna
An evil god, bent on conquest, and destroying his enemies, Kas and his people.

### Sauron
An evil god-like being, bent on conquest and destroying his enemies, the Maia(? - Gandalf and the rest) and the Free Peoples.

Lost hand and eye.

Lost finger and eye (set in tower in Minas Mogul).

Forged great and terrible artifacts, the Hand and Eye of Vecna.

Forged great and terrible artifacts, the Rings of Power.

### Kas the Destroyer
Vecna's former chief lieutenant.
Turned into vampire by Vecna.
A mighty general with magic-like magics.

### Witch-King of Angmar
Sauron's chief lieutenant.
Turned into Nazgul by Sauron.
A mighty general and master of dark powers.

### Tovag
A verdant land, torn by the chaos of war and its evil ruler, Kas.

### Gondor
A verdant land, torn by the chaos of war and its insane ruler, Denethor, who has succumbed to evil.

Based on these similarities, we can draw the conclusion that the Burning Peaks are dark mirror of Middle-Earth. This new Middle-Earth is, loosely, the out-come of the War of the Ring, in the absence or defeat of the angelic Maia (is that right?), Gandalf and the others. Here, the armies of the Witch-King, conquer Gondor, and then turn against Sauron, in parrellel to Kas' betrayal of Vecna.

There you have it, the Burning Peaks as a dark Middle-Earth. Now, since you listened so well, I'm sure you have questions and comments. If you do, I'm sure I can arrange for us to skip your evening torture, just this once. Of course, a lack of interesting responses...well, we just sharpened the points on the iron maiden this morning.

Christopher Dale Nichols

# When a Darklord Dies

**By G. Leach**

What happens to a domain when the Darklord dies? In my humble opinion, it is very dependant on what the domain's history was. In the *Castles Forlorn* module, three possible fates are outlined for Forlorn if Tristen dies: 1) Absorbed by other domains; 2) Appointment of a new Darklord; 3) Destruction. In my mind, in the case of Forlorn, only option three is viable, since Forlorn was formed solely thorugh the hideous acts of Tristen Ap'Blanc, and his history and persona has vitally shaped the domain in both geography and aura. Forlorn fits with no domain other than Forlorn, and no new darklord can take over a domain that is so customized to one domain lord. It could only be destroyed.

Here are my four posible resolutions for the fate of a realm left without a lord:

1) Absorbtion (ex: Gundarak). To me, this seems most feasible in the case of a domain like Mordent, whose darklord was only made so because he was the most powerful evil being in the area and could be replaced; or a domain whose lord was drawn into Ravenloft from another place, but spent time in other domains before proving themselves worthy of a domain of their own. Sithicus and Falkovnia fit this description.

2) New darklord (ex: Invidia, Verbrek-Arkandale). This seems most likely in the case of domains where the darklord was a Ravenloft native and earned the domain. Not that this doesn't always work; in some cases, like G'Henna and Dementlieu, the domain was modeled so closely after the lord's personality that it is dependant on him.

3) Drift to first layer. The domain becomes a first-layer domain with no darklord, doomed to slow decay in misty desolation.

4) Destruction (Daglan). And that destruction could take on many forms. I really like the idea of slow, gradual disappearance, like in The Neverending Story. But it could also sink into the sea, sink into a bank of mists, be destroyed by flame, fall away piece by piece... And who says that the destruction of a key domain might not mean the destruction of all people within it? Allowing for reasonable escape time, of course.

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